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THE
CONTEMPLATIONS AND LETTERS

OF

HENRY DORNEY,
" "

OF ULEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

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THE Contemplations and Letters of Henry Dorney were held in high estimation by Madam Phebe Phillips. The copy, which she used, came down to her as an Heirloom from her pious ancestors, and was ranked, on her private table, next to her Bible and Hymn-book. So highly did she esteem the work, that she copied out, with her own hand, a large part of the volume for the use of a friend. It is now reprinted as a precious memorial of one of the honored Founders of the Theological Institution.

GIN

Bertram Smith

March 15, 1934



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PRACTICAL DISCOURSE

OF THE

NATURE, MEANS, AND METHOD OF SALVATION.

ISAIAH 45: 17.

But Israel shall be saved in the Lord.

THE poor dove being sent abroad, and gliding over the great flood, at last found an olive branch and returned to the ark. In like manner, my confused thoughts have soared hither and thither, over the face of that great deep in which the first apostasy drowned mankind; and, having turned over the Scriptures, hoping thence to receive some news after such a dreadful shipwreck, this scripture comes flying with an olive branch in its mouth: "*Saved in the Lord.*" The first word keeps from fainting, till the next word comes in, and shows the nature of the deliverance, the certainty and the manner of it; the first word, like Ahimaaz, says, All is well; but Cushie declares the matter, and how it is accomplished.¹ Salvation, plainly asserted, is glad tidings; but lest so weighty a business should be mistaken, and that the understanding might be the more convinced; the means by which it is obtained, and the hand from whence it is procured, is drawn forth—"in the Lord." As delightful a sentence to a sinner, as that which Belshazzar saw was terrible to him; that made his joints to tremble; but this makes the lame to leap as a hart; this makes the wilderness to blossom as a rose.

The Meaning of Salvation.

Saved.—The spirit and sense of this short word "Saved" reacheth far, even to the ends of the earth.² It importeth a

¹ 2 Sam. 18: 28—32. ² Isa. 49: 6.

state of security from all enemies, and all evil from sin,¹ Satan,² condemnation, wrath, and hell;³ from all distress, etc., in this life,⁴ and hereafter.⁵

It importeth an investiture and possession of all real good in this life, and in that to come : namely, conversion, calling, justification, acceptance with God, adoption, sanctification, strength, blessing, manifestation of God, knowledge of the truth,⁶ and every good thing that may enable the heirs of life to despatch their work, find themselves victorious, and be led at last to their Father's house ; the walls whereof are salvation and peace, and the inhabitants such as are redeemed from this present evil world. The design of salvation laid the first stone of the new city, and has furnished it throughout for the guests which the Saviour of the world brings thither.

But lest my meditations should wander from my own taste into a roving speculation, I would willingly keep them under such regulation, as that they may speak the words of my heart rather than of my head ; and rather what I feel, than what I read ; and when I thus muse, I find my heart yearn after redemption and salvation in these secret groans, expressive of

The Need of Salvation.

O that I were saved from myself ! from a covetous, unrighteous, unbelieving use of the things which I here enjoy in this world ! from the pleasure of self-esteem, the wretched thought of man's praise ! O that I were saved from my daily estrangedness to the excellencies of Him who waits to be gracious to me ! When shall the price of inward communion with God outbid all other proffers ? When shall my feet be untied, that I may walk at freedom, and suck in the dictates of the Spirit, as the only air I live by ? When shall I be washed as white as snow ? When shall I pray that prayer in truth : " Thy will be done on earth (in my heart) as it is in heaven ? " When shall my eyes look upon the sun, and not be dazzled ? When shall I meditate terror, and yet triumph ? How long shall I be

¹ Matt. 1: 21. ² 2 Tim. 2: 26. ³ John 5: 24. Rom. 5: 9. ⁴ Gen. 48: 16. ⁵ 1 Thess. 1: 10. ⁶ Acts 15: 3. 2 Tim. 1: 9. Rom. 4: 25. Eph. 1: 6. Gal. 4: 5. 1 Pet. 1: 2. Isa. 45: 24. Gal. 3: 9. John 17: 26. 1 John 2: 20, 21.

taking leave of all created sweetness, and yet cannot part? When shall my notions of truth be turned into power, and the effectual working of God appear within me as a victorious conqueror? When shall my lusts and my own will die, and be quickened again in the will of my Father? When shall I see, and feel, and be freed by, the bare redemption of Jesus Christ? When shall my evil desires, contemplations, and folly of heart be starved? When shall I do all things for God, and nothing singly for myself? When will the consultation of fleshly wisdom cease, and my heart know no wisdom, no safety, no riches, but in the word of truth and promise? When shall the faith of free redemption, righteousness, and acceptance with God, be strength, joy, and victory over all my fear, infirmity and faintness? When shall I see my sins sent away into a land not inhabited, and my heart shout for joy? How long shall distempers of body disturb my mind; and the distractions of my mind hurry my inward man into the depths of mire and clay? How tinder-like is my soul to every temptation! How dim-sighted, dark, fearful, remiss, and weak-hearted am I! "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

News of Salvation.

While the breaking disquietudes of my heart do thus twist themselves together, and a variety of temptations, burdens, convictions, lusts of the flesh, groans, fears, and pantings, do all strive within me as the seat of exercise; there seems to appear the twinkling of a refuge, a morning-star, "Salvation for sinners, and perfect redemption; the vile body shall yet be made glorious, sins be blotted out, and everlasting righteousness brought in." This is good news; but how shall such a blessedness be obtained? The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed, and undertaken the work of complete redemption, on behalf of poor, weary, miserable, imprisoned souls, "in his own person," where all salvation lies; for "there is no other name under heaven, whereby a wretched sinner can be saved." Acts iv. 12.

But, alas! who can ascend into heaven, or go down into the deep, to fetch a healing medicine from this physician? It is true, he is higher than heaven, and deeper than the earth; but the word of faith is swift-winged; it reveals the

heights and depths of this relief in a moment, and cries out, by the Spirit, which searcheth the deep things of God, that "Now is come salvation and strength." Poor sinners shall be "saved," and this salvation is "in the Lord."

When I hear that redemption and salvation is to be had, and that it is to be had in the Lord, my heart cries out, Who shall bring me into this strong city, and show me the riches of saving health that is there? There is no other coming at it, but by the permission of this blessed word, "In the Lord."

These two words, *In* and *Out*, do divide all the inhabitants of the earth. All persons are either "in the Lord," or "without God in the world;"¹ either "in the new city," or "without, among the dogs."² How much weight lies upon this word, "In the Lord!" Here lies the mystery of godliness, of which the prophets and apostles spoke, and which the angels desire to look into. A salvation wrought in God, and yet enjoyable by every repenting, believing creature. Here are two wonders: first, that a sinner's salvation is wrought in God; secondly, that a sinner enjoys it in the Lord.

The Mystery of Salvation adorable.

In the Lord.—Who can with fear and reverence enough look into this ark, and not be consumed? Poor sinners are invited; Christ invites, the prophets invite, the apostles invite; the Spirit saith, Come ye, and taste that the Lord is gracious; I am the door, and the treasury too, saith Christ. The stone that closed the sepulchre is removed; the vail is rent, the holy of holies is open; come, and see.

Stand aside, flesh and blood; thou hast no share, no portion, in this work; shut thine eyes, they are no organs to receive this manifestation by. Let thine hands be feeble, and thy strength be gone; thou hast labored in vain, and art ensnared in the work of thine own hands; thou art taken in a net, and thy striving doth but increase thy bonds; thou art full of the fury of the Lord, as a wild bull in a net. Cease from thyself, lie down in ashes, cover thy lip, and cry out, Unclean, unclean! All flesh is grass, it withers, and yields no harvest. Suffer thy life to bleed away from thee, that thy strength may be gone; let the mountain become a val-

¹ Eph. 2: 12, 13. ² Rev. 22: 14, 15.

ley, take down thy battlements, be void of all self-refuge, wallow thou in the dust, and speak low, as out of the earth; for thou art spoiled of every defence. Strip thee naked, as in the day that thou wast born; be empty and void, O chaos of distress, that the new creation may pass upon thee; let thy doors be flung open, that the King, thy Redeemer, may enter in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty. He bringeth salvation, his reward is with him, his work is before him, hear his voice; for he cries, "I am thy Saviour, and there is no other." Whence comes this voice, O my soul? Do the clouds speak, and the heavens declare righteousness? Is the angel of the Lord breaking open the iron gate? "It is I," saith the Lord, "be not afraid; mine own arm shall save. Thou hast wearied thyself in the greatness of thy way; but I am come to deliver the prisoners who were appointed to die. My name is exalted, I will lay waste the mountains, and dry up the rivers, and prepare a way for my captives to return. The feeble among them shall be as David. I will lead them through the deep, and they shall not stumble. The work is mine, and I will make my own name glorious. I will be forever righteous; and yet, the justifier of poor, unrighteous, vile man: for my name is Wonderful."

These are, indeed, the words of life; and what shall I say to my Lord? My lips do quiver; I am broken; rottenness is entered into my bones; my strength faileth at the news: for who can see God and live? Spare a little, give me space to recover strength, touch me that I may stand up, and let the glory of the Lord pass before me; put me in a cleft of the rock, that I may behold, and yet not be confounded at thy appearance.

The Mystery of Salvation displayed in the Person of Jesus Christ.

In the Lord.—The eternal, incomprehensible God, who dwelleth in inaccessible light, emptieth himself, boweth the heavens, comes down and furnisheth himself with the pure nature of mankind, and is made flesh in the person of the eternal Son of the eternal Father; and, by the overshadowing of the eternal Spirit of holiness, is formed in the womb of a virgin, out of the road of that natural generation that carried along the first man Adam's guilt. And his body

being thus fitted, he sets to the work, in behalf of those whom his Father gave him, and becomes a second Adam to them. Command is given forth by his Father, that all iniquity of his chosen shall repair thither; there "all their sins meet." Isa. liii. 6, *marginal reading*.

Salvation entering on its Battle.

Great was that day of his travail, when he cried out to the north and south, east and west, to give up and bring in to him the sins of his sons and daughters, from the ends of the earth; and when he forced them into the sacrifice of the great God. They all enter with a huge train of Satan's accusations, and, smoking with the eternal indignation of a righteous God, proved and condemned by a righteous law, and the conscience of every sinner crying out, 'I have sinned, and it is most righteous that I should die eternally.'

The battle must be fought with all these, in his own person; and he must either overcome or perish. The fight is begun; the rocks rend; the heavens gather blackness, and the earth trembles. At such a surge as this, his soul was made as a boiling pot of ointment. His disciples were soon struck off their legs; they fled, and owned him not; he was left alone and given up to the combat. His Father beholds the anguish of his soul, and only supports him to endure, till he bows his head, and enters into death. The grave reigns over him three days. Now is the battle ended; the work is finished; the powers of darkness are broken; their strength defeated; the prince of this world cast out: which was declared mightily by the Spirit of holiness, through his resurrection from the dead. "Who now shall accuse? It is God that justifieth. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again. Rom. viii. 33, 34.

And that this conquest might be peaceably and surely enjoyed, and the enemies forever kept from any further invasion, he prevents future guilt by removing the law¹ (having borne the curse, and fulfilled it in his own person), that it should neither condemn nor accuse. Having already spent its condemning power and accusing power upon the person of Jesus Christ, that which before was armed with strength and clothed with thunder, becomes now a still voice; a guide, a comforter, and a guardian.

¹ Rom. 7: 6. 6: 14.

In the Lord.—The painful work being over, what remains, but that the laborer receive his wages? He hath purchased a vineyard; why may not he quietly enjoy the same? His enemy is totally spoiled; now let the land be given him for an inheritance, even to the ends of the earth. He hath purchased a spouse with the slaughter of the Philistines;¹ and now let the King's Son enjoy both her, and the glory of his conquest forever. He emptied himself, and became weak; but now liveth to God; and is the treasury of grace, pardon, righteousness, holiness, and life.

The glorious God, Father, Son, and Spirit, doth now declare the furnishing a Mediator with all fulness, that mercy might have an unlimited vent towards the redeemed, as lately justice had the like upon the Redeemer. To this end, he that was essentially fulness before, is now also become a complete Mediator, in the fulness of whatever becomes that office; exalted, to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and consecrated a Priest forever; appearing in the presence of God for his redeemed; qualified unto a boundless perfection; possessing the glory which he had with his Father before the world began, and filling human nature therewith to its utmost capacity. The glory of the holy God doth now dwell, live, act, and manage all things, in the pure nature of man; God himself dwelleth with man, and has named himself Emmanuel. The only God (in the person of the Son), dwelleth in flesh, that mankind might be reconciled to himself. And whatsoever fulness the person of the Mediator is furnished with, it is all made the inheritance of every believer, who is completed therein.²

God, as the eternal Son of the eternal Father, had eternally all perfection in himself; but as Mediator, he is anointed with the righteousness, wisdom and holiness of God, on behalf of man; and, for his use, to carry on and eternally to consummate the design of redemption. So that, what was infinite in God, and continues so still, yet dwells in, and is forever united to, a finite body. "The fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily."³ And here God and man are met together indissolubly in a Mediator; and now God and man can walk together; within the bond of an eternal agreement; which otherwise could not have been. For "how can two walk together unless they be agreed?"⁴ God who

¹ 1 Sam. 18: 17—27. ² Col. 2: 10. ³ Col. 2: 9. ⁴ Amos 3: 3.

dwells in unapproachable light, is now, by an unspeakable dispensation of grace, come within the narrow confines of human nature, and fills it with himself; that He, who is all in himself, might be all in man, and make man all in Him. The partition wall is taken down, that man might be in a capacity to enjoy God, after the power of an infinite and endless life; and that God may have scope enough to spend infinite love on man, and rest in that love, and rejoice in it, as in his portion, with freedom, and fulness of satisfaction.

Here lies the wonder of the gospel, the unsearchable wisdom of God! and who can pry into it without astonishment? This is that which makes the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad,—that good-will is come to men in the person of God-man, the Mediator, who is “over all, God blessed forever.”¹

Salvation by Christ applied.

In the Lord.—But how is this made actually applicable to every particular redeemed person, for whom this glorious design was undertaken?

The ever-blessed God, in taking the human nature into union with himself in the person of the eternal Word, the Son of the Father, through the virtue of the Spirit, (that the decree of Salvation for the elect might be fully executed,) became the undertaker, the representative, and the seminal root, of all and every person ordained to life.

1. He was and is the undertaker for them; bearing all their sins in the guilt and punishment, with every particular aggravation of them, in the utmost extent.² He hid not his face from the shame, nor his heart from the sorrow; but drank up that mighty Jordan, and the rivers of brimstone which the breath of the Lord had kindled; which was the portion of that cup, poured out without mixture, for the wretched offspring of the first Adam,—who were the rightful, and most necessary heirs, by generation, of the guilt of the first and comprehensive apostasy of Adam and Eve, the common parents of all mankind. He also undertook their help and deliverance, and miscarried not.³ Though the earth trembled under the weight of such an undertaking, yet he fainted not, nor was discouraged, till he was taken from prison and judgment, and brought forth judgment unto

¹ Rom. 9: 5. Acts 10: 36. ² Isaiah 53: 6. ³ Psalm 89: 19.

victory; and so obtained eternal redemption and life for them that believe, even those whom the Father hath given to him.

2. He became also, at the same time, their representative, sustaining their persons. In him they are gathered together in one, or, more properly, summed up;¹ and are really, through union with Him, crucified with Him;² risen with Him;³ and entered into heaven with Him, their forerunner,⁴ who there appears adorned with their names, as so many precious stones upon his breast, as well as borne upon his shoulders,⁵ in all his undertakings for them. Hence we are said to be saved *in* the Lord, and preserved *in* Jesus Christ,⁶ as well as saved *by* Him. As He is Mediator, he stands as the collective body of all the elect; and therefore in saving them he is said to save himself.⁷ And hence it is, that in whatever he did and suffered as mediator, the scope of his heart eyed his people, as doing *their* work therein.⁸ And the Lord Jesus is thus their representative, as God's elect (for he is the Father's elected one⁹), in whom the redeemed were elected before the world began.¹⁰

3. He is also their seminal cause, in his procreating virtue. They (even every particular person of the saved of the Lord), are found in Him, as every sprig of the tree is virtually in the root, as the natural cause of it. And as the seed that is sown has in it the growth and substance of all the seeds that spring and come forth from thence, as their generating and producing principle, so is Christ to his people. Hence it is, that he and they are called, not seeds, but seed;¹¹ for in their original principle, they are one in him. And thus the kingdom of God is compared to a grain of mustard-seed, that, by its fruitfulness, becomes a great tree: And this is the leaven that leaveneth the whole lump;¹² bringing forth a seasoning nature, according to the likeness of its first cause and original. And thus are believers called branches, whereof he is the root; or the vine, which is the cause and life of the branches;¹³ and he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are both of one,¹⁴ founded in the same eternal decree, in which Jesus Christ has the preëminence, as the first in God's eye: and the redeemed also in

¹ Eph. 1: 10. ² Gal. 2: 20. ³ Col. 3: 1. ⁴ Heb. 6: 19, 20. Eph. 2: 6. ⁵ Exod. xxviii. ⁶ Jude 1. ⁷ Isa. 59: 16. 63: 5. ⁸ Isa. 26: 12. ⁹ Isa. 42: 1. ¹⁰ Eph. 1: 4. ¹¹ Gal. 3: 16. ¹² Matt. 13: 31—33. ¹³ John 15: 5. ¹⁴ Heb. 2: 11.

his eye, in him ; and both these in their own order. As the root is in order before the tree, and the branches which do spring from the root ; so is Christ first as the root, and the redeemed are as the branches ; and as the branches are the glory of the root, so is every believer the glory of Christ,¹ and the manifestation of the fulness that is in him who filleth all in all.²

Hitherto has salvation been considered in the foundation thereof, even Jesus Christ ; whom God has laid (in the constitution of his person, made up of two natures, divine and human), to be the ground of hope for the heirs of salvation. And as the foundation of Solomon's temple consisted of costly stones ; so does the temple of Christ's body, which God hath pitched and not man.

How should the hearts of all the expectants of life rejoice, at the laying of the foundation by so wise a master-builder ; who counted the cost of the whole superstructure, when he drew the model of it in his eternal purpose ; and has power enough to carry it on ; so that neither the reproach of satan, nor the contradiction of man's polluted state, shall ever have cause to say, He laid a foundation, but had not wherewith to finish it ! Is the foundation so stately, and shall not gold and precious stones also be the building ? The same mysterious wonder which appeared at the first, continues still in the carrying on of the building.

In all material and earthly buildings, the stones of the building do not, all of them, immediately touch the foundation ; but one stone of the superstructure is a mediate foundation to another, though the whole do ultimately rest upon the first foundation ; but in this building, every stone doth particularly rest upon the first foundation, and so the building groweth to be an holy temple in the Lord ; for the Spirit of the foundation hath immediate influence in every stone that is built thereon.³ For this cause the stones are called lively, or living stones, when once they rest on this living foundation ; and are become recipients of the life thereof, according to their measure.⁴

In like manner doth the mystery of this union surpass all other resemblances of it. It is compared to the union of a head and members, root and branches ; in which resemblances, every member and every branch is not contiguous to the

¹ 1 Cor. 11: 7. ² Eph. 1: 23. ³ Eph. 2: 21, 22. ⁴ 1 Peter 2: 4, 5.

head, or to the root ; but in this union, every member of the mystical body of Christ is alike near to the head, as concerning their real interest therein ; they are in the head, and in the root immediately, and yet members and branches orderly set, and growing up to the stature and comely proportion of a perfect man, and a beautifully fruitful vine, in and by the Spirit of the Lord.¹

So that the nearest and most exact resemblances do but partially resemble this union. The relations of parent and child, husband and wife, shepherd and sheep, do but help us to taste, as it were, a drop here and there of the unspeakable nearness and abounding fulness, delight, glory, and mutual satisfaction, of this union betwixt God and man, in the mystery of this Mediator.

A Believer's Thirst.

But, alas ! how comes it to pass that, seeing the real truth of this mystery is so rich and glorious, and so well ordered in all things ; how comes it to pass, that my soul lies like a withered branch, and dead limb ? O that the Lord would cause the wind of gospel-power so to breathe forth, that the dry bones might live, and my heart, as the trees of God, be full of sap !

Although the Father hath been pleased that all fulness should dwell in Christ, as a treasury for the redeemed to live in, and to live upon ; yet, unless those treasures are actually communicated to every needy soul that is interested therein, and every such soul is wrought up to some living improvement thereof, they are but as treasures hid in the earth, as an inheritance not possessed, or as a possession not enjoyed. Oh, how ill doth my barren heart become such an inquiry as this is ! What is all this treasure, unless actually and really enjoyed ? Could my heart truly yearn, and could my affections truly burn with desire after it, I might even now shortly hope to see the salvation of God.

This mystery of love rises yet higher and higher. It is full of blessedness, and travails to be delivered ; which appears in this : that God is willing it should be made known ; and therefore hath sent a message and manifestation of it to men.² And this is that which bears down all difficulties ;

¹ Eph. 4: 13. Hosca 14: 6, 7, 8. ² Col. 1: 26, 27.

for he, who doth whatsoever he will, hath willed the discovery thereof.

And the Spirit of Jesus Christ stands in the high places of the streets, to call in the poor, the blind, the lame, to partake of this large provision. The Spirit cries, "Come;" and it cries out, not persuasively only, but influentially by effectual working. His words are creating power; and shall not my heart also, in the language of the bride, say, "Come, come, O my beloved?"

Now my meditations are (methinks) entering into a wide sea again. Shall my straitened heart and polluted soul indeed change a close dungeon for a large palace, and enjoy liberty and purity at once? Shall my filthy garments and my iniquity pass away in one day? Who can describe the nature of such a change as this? No less than the overshadowing of the same Spirit, which formed Christ in the womb of the Virgin, doth also form him anew in every redeemed soul; and quickens it from the law of sin and death, to be a new creature, in holiness, righteousness, wisdom and truth, after the image of him that created it.

My thoughts are now aground; they want water to carry them off. Mere speculation and tradition are uncomfortable helps at this work. An eye-witness and an ear-witness are the best guides. Spiritual taste and experience can best dive into these truths and privileges.

O that I might both see in my mind, and feel in my heart, what I am about to utter, or, at least, desire to grope after, in this wonder of wonders, concerning the soul's actual inheriting, marrying, and possessing Jesus Christ, with all the admirable privileges and glory of that state!

Oh, for one gale of wind, one breath of the Spirit, to lift me over the bar of a carnal mind; that I might close with, and enter into such a Saviour, such a salvation as this is!

Who can give a poor sinner in marriage to the Prince of Life? The angel is come down, and the waters are troubled, but where is the hand that will lift a diseased, impotent soul into the healing waters? The fields are white unto the harvest: when shall the sickle enter, and the corn be brought into the garner? O that Almighty power would break forth from the presence of God, to effect the design of his own pity and love! "My flesh faileth, and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart. Awake, O arm of the Lord! divide the sea, and let thy ransomed pass over. Love

is strong as death," let me not starve at the threshold. Be not withdrawn, O thou "who putttest in thy hand by the hole of the door; my bowels are moved for thee."

Christ and a Believer met together.

There are various expressions in the scriptures, some of which intimate the mystery of closing with, or transition into Christ, in one kind, and some in another; because any single expression or similitude is too little to comprehend the whole extent of such a union; and hence we have, on the soul's part, the terms of "committing to, or rolling on, the Lord,"¹ in reference to ease from burdens; and "leaning upon the beloved,"² in reference to ease from weariness, with delight in that rest; and a "waiting patiently with trust,"³ importing the soul's security in him; a "giving ourselves to the Lord,"⁴ implying a free consent of the will; a "knowing of Christ,"⁵ intimating the satisfaction of the understanding therein; "eating his flesh and drinking his blood,"⁶ importing the soul's constant livelihood on, and incorporated union with him; and "dwelling in him,"⁷ expressing shelter and intimate acquaintance. Hence also we have, on the part of Christ, terms equally expressive of his closing with the soul, such as "being known of him,"⁸ and "apprehended by him;"⁹ his being "ravished with, or losing his heart upon, his beloved;"¹⁰ his "giving himself," through the whole work of redemption, in a way of "love;"¹¹ and "resting in that love."¹² Hence also we have the expressions of a "mutual and united interest, such as crucified, dead, buried, planted together, quickened, risen, ascended, and sitting in heavenly places with him;"¹³ "partaking of his sufferings and he of ours;"¹⁴ "glorified in him, and he in us."¹⁵ To help on this discovery, there comes in the resemblance of marriage-union, the union of ingrafture, and of "leaven to the lump,"¹⁶ importing the winning nature which this union with Christ hath, in its transforming power upon

¹ Psalm 37: 5, with the *marginal reading*. ² Cant. 8: 5. ³ Psalm 37: 7. Proverbs 3: 5. ⁴ 2 Cor. 8: 5. ⁵ John 17: 3. ⁶ John 6: 54. ⁷ John 6: 56. 1 John 4: 13. ⁸ John 10: 27. Gal. 4: 9. ⁹ Phil. 3: 12. ¹⁰ Cant. 4: 9, including the *marginal reading*. ¹¹ Eph. 5: 2, 25. Gal. 2: 20. Rev. 1: 5. ¹² Zeph. 3: 17. ¹³ Gal. 2: 20. Col. 2: 20. Rom. 6: 4, 5. Col. 2: 12. 3: 1. Eph. 2: 5, 6. ¹⁴ 1 Peter 4: 13. Hebrews 4: 15. Isaiah 63: 9. ¹⁵ 2 Thess. 1: 12. ¹⁶ Romans 7: 4. 11: 17. Matt. 13: 33.

the soul, rendering it "willing" to its change in the day of the Spirit's overshadowing,"¹ though ever so unsuitable, averse, and froward before."² And hence it is, that, as Christ saith, "Thou hast ravished my heart;"³ the soul saith in return, "Love is strong as death; it hath a most vehement flame: set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm."⁴ Christ saith, "My love is as the lily among thorns;" and she saith, "My beloved is as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood."⁵ They are each set forth as admiring one another's excellencies: and whilst Christ is recreating himself in that beauty which he hath put upon his beloved; the believer, in that furniture with which Christ adorns him, familiarly, though with reverence, loves, speaks to, and rejoiceth in him, as one that now enjoys his person; and lives, moves, breathes and acts in the person of Christ, by way of mystical union and participation of his grace. Galat. ii. 20.

All which workings in the soul towards, about, and upon Christ, are in scripture comprehensively included in the word faith, and they are called the fruits of faith, or the various and multiplied operations of the soul, yielding itself to God in Christ, wrought thereto by the Spirit of Jesus Christ through the gospel: for what else is faith, but an owning of Jesus Christ, in the manifestation and secret owning where-with Christ owns a sinner, by his Spirit, to pity, love, and save him? What is faith else, but the digestive faculty of the new man, by which it feeds on Jesus Christ, and grows up into his likeness, in the appropriating to itself whatever Christ is or has done, as Mediator for sinners.

So that faith, in all the fore-mentioned exercises of closing with Christ, gives Christ an existence in the soul, by which he dwells in the heart;⁶ that as the godhead (Father, Son, and Spirit) dwells in Christ, so Christ dwells in the faith of his people; by which they have communion with him, and by him have access to, and communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even through the operation of the same Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

All the operations of the Spirit of Christ, in his will effecting this closure, are on his part called grace; and the answerable power to receive, comply with, and improve it, by the same Spirit of his, is called faith.

¹ Psalm 110: 3.² Ezekiel 16: 4, 5, 8, 63. 11: 12.³ Cant. 4: 9.⁴ Cant. 8: 6.⁵ Cant. 2: 2, 3.⁶ Eph. 3: 17.

We are said to be saved by faith, as it is an active power, wrought by the Spirit, for receiving and entertaining of Jesus Christ; that is to say, a property in, or possessory right to, his person, and thereby an interest in the salvation which he hath wrought; and is therefore called a working of the work of God;¹ in opposition to all works of nature, morality and religion, wrought by human strength and understanding: as coals, which of themselves are cold and heatless, and do not burn at all, are yet said to burn, in that the nature of them is possessed, and as it were, made active, by the element of fire, to co-operate, to heat and burn, through the principle and spirit of fire which has seized on them, and brought them into a concurrence; but the element of fire doth the whole work. In like manner, Christ doth the whole work of a Christian; and yet is the Christian said to fulfil the law, and to work righteousness, and to save himself;² which is through union with Christ, in the recipient and active faculty of believing, wrought by his Spirit in the new creature.

Christ and a Believer's Closure unfolded.

This mutual closure between a believer and Christ is called by different names in the Scriptures.

Reconciliation.

It is called reconciliation;³ for as much as the enmity and contrariety of sinful and averse nature on man's part, and the distance and contrariety of the nature of God, are hereby removed; in that the love of God is hereby shed abroad in the heart, changing and cleansing it, and filling it with the seeds of purity and truth, after his own image, which he looks upon as very good.⁴

Regeneration.

It is also called regeneration;⁵ forasmuch as every defiling tincture of the natural birth is removed, and the soul brought forth from the corrupt line of the first Adam's guilt, into the lineage of the second Adam; freed from the guilt and punishment of all natural corruption, and spirited with

¹ John 6: 29. ² Rom. 8: 4. Heb. 11: 33. 1 Tim. 4: 16. ³ 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19. ⁴ Gen. 1: 27: 31. ⁵ Tit. 3: 5.

the pure life of God, to the exercise of holiness in the inward man.

Hence it is said, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not."¹ The person of every believer bears the image of the two Adams, as two twins in one womb: the image of the first Adam is wholly sinful, as Adam was; but the image of the second Adam, (distinctly considered,) is wholly righteous, as Christ is.² And these two natures being in one person, the first being spoiled of its reign and sovereignty, and become vassal and condemned, as dead in law; the second bears chief rule, and receives the denomination of the person, and also the actions of the same person, proceeding from the renewed living, and more noble part. With regard unto this is the Lord said to see no iniquity in Jacob;³ that is, he seeth it not so, as to be enraged against the person of any true Israelite; because he beholds it through a propitiatory sacrifice, and not in its naked, condemning strength and guilt.

A New Creation.

It is also called a new creature, or a new creation;⁴ in that free love, working through Christ, from the eternal purpose of God's good-will; brings forth (of no pre-existing matter) a perfect righteousness, (not of the works of the law, but of pure grace and gift,) through union with the Mediator, God and Man: and the Spirit moving thereupon, quickens the soul from the death of nature and sin, to the life of grace and holiness.

Adoption.

It is likewise called adoption;⁵ forasmuch as the everlasting Father, begetting in himself the eternal Son, and furnishing him (in time) with the nature of man, and having commissioned him by decree and seal to be Mediator, gave him the elect remnant of mankind; whose persons, case, and condition, the Mediator took into his own body by a secret union, for the purpose of effecting whatsoever was to have been done and suffered by him on their behalf: which union of theirs with the only begotten Son of God, through the Spirit, makes them also sons in him, of the same Father;

¹ 1 John 5: 18.

² 2 Cor. 5: 21. Rom. 8: 4.

³ Num. 23: 21.

⁴ 2 Cor. 5: 17. ⁵ Eph. 1: 5.

by whose Spirit they have access to God, and may and ought to call him Abba, Father, as he doth ; being heirs and co-heirs with him of the same glory, according to their measure. Rom. viii. 14—17. Eph. ii. 18.

What is a Christian ?

The person that is thus owned and received by Jesus Christ, and by the virtue of his Spirit, owns and surrenders up himself to him again, is called a Christian.

What is a Believer.

And in that his life doth now subsist in the life of Christ, through this closure, (as the natural body lives by conjunction with the natural soul,) such a person is called a believer. And all the actions of his new life proceeding from this faith, reliance on, and closing with Christ, are called the works of faith ; which are no other than the works and operation of the Spirit of Christ, acting in the soul and body of that person, who is taken into this mysterious union and translation.

Faith managing its War.

And as there was perpetual war between the house of David and the house of Saul, until David was established in the throne ; even so it is between the Spirit and life of Christ in the soul, and the life of sin, which, through the defilement of the first Adam, dwells in our flesh ; which keeps the person of a believer in continual exercise, being as the seat of war, (Michael and his angels fighting with the Dragon and his angels) in which sin strives to defend, and keep its possession : but the Spirit of Christ in this closure with the heart, as a giant, refreshed in his own almighty power, encounters the strong man, Satan and his seed, which had possessed the heart, ever since the fall of our first parents.

In this encounter, the Spirit of Christ, having gained the heart by a measure of renewing in every part, maintains and fortifies it, and increases it, by union with himself ; and comes forth in the exercise and improvement of that union, by his power working therein mightily, to destroy the "body of sin

and opposition ;”¹ which is therefore called “the fight of faith ;”² being no other than the striving of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, in his own renewed interest, which he has got in the heart, making it active to concur with him through his Spirit acting and moving therein ; as the Spirit of the living creatures is said to move in the wheels.”³ And this active, renewed interest, being the seed of God, and spirited with his life and power, makes war with the remaining seed of the serpent, and is restless till the body of indwelling sin be destroyed, wasted, and worn out. Which victory is fully perfected at the dissolution of the body from the soul.”⁴ Then are the wages paid off, and sin fully discharged to the believer, Rom. vi. 23.

This combat is managed on faith’s part, by discovering and discrediting the nature of sin, and “subduing the dominion and strength thereof.”

In discovering Sin.

The discovery of sin is wrought by union with Christ, who is “the light ;”⁵ which sets up, as it were, a sentinel at every corner of the heart, and is as a lamp in the dark places thereof, exercising itself by a renewed conscience. Conscience merely natural bears a forced testimony against sin in the heart, and is no other than the accusing power of God in his most righteous law, either remaining more darkly in the nature of all men, since sin entered in upon them, at the first falling away from God in paradise ;⁶ or more clearly manifested by the written law, testifying, according to the most righteous and holy nature of it, against all unrighteousness and unholiness of men,⁷ which gendereth unto terror, through the repugnancy of the corrupt inclination in man’s nature ; which corruption, to defend itself, either hides from conscience, and covers itself under ignorance, sensual satisfactions, remiss, careless inadvertency to the voice of conscience ; or violently compelleth conscience to speak beside its own true bent, or misinterpreteth the language thereof, or otherwise stands up in a resolved, peremptory opposition thereunto ; which sometimes, by the righteous judgment of God, renders conscience speechless, so that the corruption

¹ Eph. 4: 16. 1: 19, 20. Col. 1: 29. ² 1 Tim. 6: 12. 2 Tim. 4: 7.
³ Ezek. 1: 20. ⁴ 1 Cor. 15: 44—57. ⁵ John 3: 21. ⁶ Rom. 2: 14, 15.
⁷ Rom. 1: 18.

and wickedness of the heart may, with a boundless security and heart-searedness, and like the people of Laish, without shame,¹ commit sin with greediness and wanton delight.² But when Christ enters upon the heart, he sets conscience at liberty, removes its fetters, and causeth it to lift up its voice like a trumpet; and withal makes it to close in with that seed of the new birth, and justifying interest in his own blood, which he has sown in the heart, and thereby founded a perpetual antipathy against sin: so that conscience, being succored by this renewed interest of Jesus Christ in the heart, doth, with approbation, pry into the whole soul, and present the holy nature of God there, and his righteous law, charging and accusing sin in its whole extent, and in the aggravation of all circumstances; with which the renewed heart willingly concurs, and so hasteneth away to the mercy seat. And thus the mutual closing between Christ and the soul tends much to discover sin, and strip it of its former defences. The same conviction is now become a friend, that was before an enemy; and this renewed interest in the soul answers the conviction of conscience, (as Jezebel's eunuch's did to the command of Jehu,)³ with present execution; and cries out, "So let thy enemies perish, O Lord."

In discrediting Sin.

Faith likewise appears, in the virtue of this closure with Christ, to discredit sin; for herein the crucified body of Jesus Christ displays the venomous nature of sin; and by the spotlessness of his nature manifested to the heart, in the power of convincing light, through the matchless perfection thereof, causeth the shame and nakedness of sin to appear; demonstrating its deceit, false promises, unsatisfying content, and merciless embracements. So that sin, upon this discovery and discredit which have passed upon it, doth drive the soul to the city of refuge, viz. free justification by the blood of Christ; which, reflecting back upon the heart, causes impartial examination, and sharp remorse; drawing forth sin to be crucified on Christ's cross in the same posture, without lessening or concealing thereof, in which it stood, while it was working rebellion against the Lord: which operation of

¹ Judges 18: 7.

² Eph. 4: 19.

³ 2 Kings 9: 32, 33.

the new man, in the mutual closure betwixt Christ and the soul, is called "repentance unto life."

In Subduing Sin.

Faith yet goes further, in subduing the power of sin. Sin rageth in the guilt and defiling nature of it. The guilt is removed, in that Christ, in this closure, lets the heart know that he hath owned its guilt. In the same day in which he performed the office of a kinsman, in taking our nature and bearing our sins, he inherited also the guilt of our persons; (as was prefigured in the law concerning redemption of inheritances; Ruth iv. 5.) So that, in this closing with Christ, the guilt passeth away from the person closing with Christ, who freed himself again from the same, by an infinite satisfaction, offering up himself through the eternal Spirit and power of his godhead.¹ And the heart, being quickened by this closure, puts to its seal, and in the power of that closure triumpheth over all sorts of guilt, because it is "Christ that died, and God that justifieth."

Hence likewise ariseth the power to wipe out the defilement of sin, in that the understanding is furnished with reason against it; "How shall I, who am dead to sin with Christ, live any longer therein?" Which just and true reasoning, being carried on and strengthened by the virtue of the death of Christ, (secretly wrought by the Spirit of union with Christ) crucifieth sin day by day; and, through the improvement of one conviction after another, brings the soul to loathe and be sick of sinful self; when, through an inward virtue of the resurrection of Christ, it rises up from the enslaving power of it, and seeks the things above: for at the same time that Christ's human nature was loosed from the bonds of death, all the redeemed virtually entered into their freedom and dominion over sin; which privilege of grace is more and more brought to the conscience, heart, and life of the elect, by the conveyance of the power of the Spirit of God, in the revelation of their interest in Christ risen from the dead; and by faith and willing closure with him, (which is called a marriage to him) "they bring forth fruit unto God."² And thus they pass, through mortification, into the operations of a new life:³ so that sin, being thus discovered, discredited, and so far subdued, lies ready

¹ Heb. 9: 14. 10: 14.

² Rom. 7: 2—4.

³ 1 Pet. 4: 2.

to expire and take its leave. And what a salvation is this which God has wrought in himself for sinners after such a rate !

And yet, alas ! how apt am I to carnalize this work of faith, and make it a work of my own ! To work by not working, and yet herein to work : here lieth the difficulty ; here lies true self-denial. A work wrought without me, yet wrought upon me, and working me into the activity of the spirit of my Redeemer, by the operation thereof ; so that what he doth I am said to do, and enabled to do, singly and simply in the quickening interest of his life and power, working, and causing me to work therein the works of God. Neither men nor angels can reveal this. So that a believer may cry out, "I am wonderfully and fearfully made."¹ But that counsel, that contrived the new creature, and curiously wrought it in the secrets of his own purpose, is able to reveal it. "Who knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God, and he to whom the Spirit doth declare them?"² Oh that I might be led powerfully into this inquiry, and changed into the stamp of such a translating life and power, by the Spirit of the Lord !

It is called a transformation, through the "renewing of the mind."³ The old, unrenewed mind draws all its arguments and reasoning from things below, that are among men, and conformed to the principles of human ability, capacity, or reason ; but this transformation in the renewed mind draws all its arguments from the design of new-covenant grace ;⁴ and from the ability, capacity, and reason of the spirit and power of Jesus Christ, who has carried away the soul from its own interest, into the rightful interest and active method of the spirit of his cross, resurrection, and life ; and suffers no conclusions to be made but from these premises, and according to the rules of such reasoning, which the apostle directeth to, Rom. vi. 11.

This transformation by faith, or closure with Christ, is influentially argumentative. Through the soul's beholding of the glory of a God, in whom it has an interest, in the person of a Mediator, it is changed (in a measure through-out) into the same image, by his Spirit ; and its understanding argues in the power and facility of a renewed instinct,

¹ Psalm 139: 14.

² 1 Cor. 2: 10, 11.

³ Rom. 12: 2.

⁴ Ezek. 36: 26, 27.

accompanied with the breathing of the Spirit, suited to the region of this change, and so bears the soul into the vision, power, and truth of this mysterious new state.

The Soul yet thirsts for a further View.

O that my gracious God would guide my eye and my heart a little further into this inquiry, not for curiosity, but for renewing my dark mind, and unmortified will, to a powerful conformity to his revealed will! Doubtless, faith hath a strange pasture to feed in, and a wonderful transforming glass to behold its redemption through.

The infinite God humbles himself into the lowest form of man's nature;¹ and yet retains his infinite being still, which the heaven of heavens is not able to contain. This is that condescension which the angels pry into, and take it up by degrees, as they find it manifested to men in the ministration of the gospel, preached unto, and received by them, through the Spirit.²

God comes down into the very nature of all mankind, in the union of the single body of Jesus Christ with the incomprehensible essence, in the person of the Son. "The Word, which is very God, was made flesh,³ and God dwelleth in him,⁴ and really, legally, and judicially transacteth the whole business of redemption in that body, as the determined and fitted substitute of every individual person of the elect; making the work prosperously perfect, on their behalf in the person of Christ, who was born at Bethlehem, who suffered death at Jerusalem, and rose again; transmitting the virtue thereof by his Spirit through the gospel, in some measure to the understanding and conscience of every one whose person he sustained, that their faith and hope might be in God;⁵ and that they might enjoy whatever he purchased as their own possession. They suffered in his stripes, satisfied divine justice in his death, fulfilled the law to a tittle in his perfect righteousness, are ascended in his victory, and are sons and heirs of God, in the interest they have in his person, through that human nature of their own which he assumed to himself. This plea has faith to make by way of answer to all the powers of darkness.⁶ God, in the second person, manageth all man's work in that human

¹ Phil. 2: 6—8.

² Eph. 3: 10.

³ John 1: 1, 14.

⁴ Col. 2: 9.

⁵ 1 Peter 1: 21.

⁶ 1 Peter 3: 21.

nature, as truly as if he had been only man. He overcomes, and completes redemption for them, as fully as the perfection of the divine essence could do it. Human nature did no way weaken divine power, but (as it were) capacitate it for man's cure, that God might be just, and yet the justifier of sinful man. This real taking of man's nature into personal union, and every elected one, in the interest of that nature, into union also, (which is called mystical union,) makes the infinite God, who is a Spirit, delight to use man's language of himself, in the way of man; namely, to walk, to sup with them: and also those expressions of the parts of man's body, arms, hands, mouth, eyes, face and the like, so frequently used in the scriptures, as evidences of the indissoluble union between the divine and human nature, which in the fulness of time he actually assumed; and which being assumed into the person of the Son, every elected one is capacitated to receive the same Spirit of the Son, whereby they cry Abba, Father, in the interest they have, through him and his redemption, in his Father;¹ which is the very inlet of that closure betwixt Christ and his members, that are redeemed, mentioned before; in the virtue of which closure by the Spirit, Christ owns their spirit, soul, and body to be his,² and all their actions and sufferings upon his account, to be his also. And they, as far as they, by his Spirit, live in the virtue of this closure, act nothing but the life of Christ Jesus, the Lord dwelling in them. Hence it is that so often expressions to that sense are used by the apostle Paul: "I salute you in the Lord;"³ "my ways which are in Christ;"⁴ "my work in the Lord;"⁵ "this I say and testify in the Lord;"⁶ "I rejoiced in the Lord;"⁷ "I speak the truth in Christ;"⁸ and when speaking of others, "every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus;"⁹ "refresh my bowels in the Lord;"¹⁰ "be strong in the Lord;"¹¹ "stand fast in the Lord; be of the same mind in the Lord;"¹² and so, in reference to conjugal and other relations; "neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord;"¹³ "the wife, if her husband be dead, is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord;"¹⁴ "Children, obey your parents in the Lord;"¹⁵ "ye serve

¹ Gal. 4: 6. ² 1 Cor. 6: 20. ³ Rom. 16: 22. ⁴ 1 Cor. 4: 17.

⁵ 1 Cor. 9: 1. ⁶ Eph. 4: 17. ⁷ Phil. 4: 10. ⁸ 1 Tim. 2: 7.]

⁹ Philemon 6. ¹⁰ Philemon 20. ¹¹ Eph. 6: 10.

¹² Phil. 4: 1, 2. ¹³ 1 Cor. 11: 11. ¹⁴ 1 Cor. 7: 39. ¹⁵ Eph. 6: 1.

the Lord Christ ;”¹ speaking of the obedience of servants to their masters ; with many such like expressions, flowing from the life of faith in Christ, through that mutual closure between him and the soul, acting in and by the rules of that life of Christ truly and really dwelling in them, and exerted by those words and actions used in his name. For this cause the apostle saith, the believing Corinthians were not their own,² but Christ’s ; as an argument against defiling their bodies, which are said to be “members of his body.”³

From this ground, faith, as the active flame rising up from the warmth of this mutual closure with Christ, seizes and fastens upon all the promises in the scriptures, whether absolute or conditional. If absolute, they are made in Christ. If conditional, the condition lies upon his power to perform, and all the privilege is theirs ; because the promises are made to him, and he and they are one spirit, in this closure and marriage which he has made. His person, and so all his achievements and rewards, are theirs ; the care of their bodies, lives, estates, credit, comfort of relations, all lies upon him ; because they are his, in whatever they are. Upon this ground, the Lord saith with his own mouth, by the prophet, “Whosoever toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye ;”⁴ and when the saints were persecuted, Christ said, “He was persecuted ;”⁵ hence it is, that David saith, “I am thine, save me,” Ps. cxix. 94.

But (methinks) while my meditation is stepping from one view of the inheritance to another, I find a great aptness to lose the method of, and the united conformity to, the whole pattern of my Mediator. While I am viewing his life, and the operations of it, I skip away from his cross ; and do forget, that the virtue of his death goes along with him in all the steps of his work ; whereas I find that the same apostle, who saw him, in a vision, clothed with power, splendor and glory,⁶ saw him also as a lamb that was slain.⁷ The virtue and power of his incarnation and death abides with him, as the primitive constitution, that cleared the way, and fitted him for the glorious achievements of his exaltation ; answerable unto which, the Spirit of the gospel works prosperously, when it mortifies in quickening, when it destroys in saving, when it emptieth in filling, and pulleth down in building up. Though Christ may not, and cannot be brought again to the

¹ Col. 3: 24.² 1 Cor. 6: 19.³ 1 Cor. 6: 15.⁴ Zech. 2: 8.⁵ Acts 9: 4.⁶ Rev. 1: 13—16.⁷ Rev. 5: 6.

grave ; (he dieth no more, Rom. vi. 9.) because he hath made an end of sin, by the sacrifice of himself, offered up once for all, and hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, and set them apart, by the merit thereof, from condemnation, at the bar of divine justice, in his own person ; yet the applying virtue of this, by faith, still remains vigorous, with the rest of the excellencies of his mediatorship, to out-plead the guilt and punishment of sin, and the fear thereof, from molesting the conscience, which otherwise is not able to give constant answers, and drive back the darts of the evil one.¹ This virtue of his death is that, which doth also bring forth in the soul a self-denying liberty ; for the perfect mediator, by his Spirit, doth make all things new, according to the image of his own person ; in which respect, the redeemed are called, not only sons of God in Christ, as interested in his person by the mystical union through the Spirit, but also sons of Christ, in that the image of the Mediator, in every part of that office, is drawn, and (as it were) propagated into the souls of the redeemed, through the inward working of his own Spirit, which is the Spirit of a crucified, buried, risen, and glorified Saviour : and such a salvation in such a Saviour, doth the Spirit, by a lively and powerful faith, form in every new creature. So that a new creature may be thus described : it is the virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, subduing the old man, resting in the heart, and working it to a lively conformity to the Mediator, by receiving every impression of his image.

Salvation in Christ's Person for a Believer originally.

As the sense and relish of these workings between Christ and the soul are not always clearly discerned, it is of great use (both for the knowledge of one's eternal interest in him, and to derive, in true method, grace and strength to help in time of need), to consider well, that the happiness and safety of a Christian do not originally lie in the exercise of faith, or any other grace ; but in God himself, obliged by covenant, confirmed in Jesus Christ. So that when faith fails, He fails not ; "he cannot deny himself."² He himself being the portion of his people, feeds their faith with strength and discoveries thereof. And as the actual closing betwixt

¹ Heb. 10. 2. 9: 14. ² 2 Tim. 2: 13.

Christ and the soul come down from that covenant which God made with Christ, and, in him, with his members; and continues everlastingly, by its relation to that covenant, as the root in which God has given himself to his people, and engaged to perfect whatever concerns them; therefore the soul is, at the first view, to look upon God, as he has manifested himself in Christ, and by faith to rely upon him as freely, as he did freely enter into covenant. He looked upon man in all his misery, and made a covenant with him in the Mediator. Our work is also to look upon him, assenting to, and claiming interest in, that covenant.

When God, by his Spirit, doth close with the soul in Jesus Christ, and refresheth it in that change, he doth not allow that soul to feed (sensually as it were) on that refreshment, but on him; between whom and the soul Christ ratified a covenant by his death, etc. So that every particle of such refreshment lies properly in this, that a voluntarily covenanted God doth, in such or such manifestations, declare himself; and not in the manifestations themselves, singly considered.

Salvation offered to all alike.

As God hath been pleased to declare a covenant-reconciliation to every creature that is under heaven,¹ no person, in that visible dispensation, is excluded; but all have an equal right and nearness to that reconciliation, in the outward call: and no person is allowed to think, that any other has now a more native privilege than himself thereto, or one a more easy way to attain it than another. It is a holding out of grace to men altogether sinful, and equally miserable; and so it considers them, Rom. iii. from the 10th to the 20th verse. The ground for encouragement to lay hold upon the offer, is one and the same to every living human creature, which is, the declared willingness of God, in the engagement of the whole essence, to save sinners, 1 Tim. ii. 4, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And thus Jesus Christ is set forth as a propitiation for the sins of every man in the world;² so far as the word of the gospel reacheth in the declaring of it, and all the privileges of the covenant of grace, relating to this life, and that to come. And it is proclaimed equally to all, upon the bare invitation to believe it, and receive it. So

¹ Col. 1: 23. ² 1 John 2: 2.

that the reason why one believes and receives, and another doth not, ariseth not from any difference at all in the invitation itself; ¹ but faith being the gift of God, he giveth it to whomsoever he will: ² and doth thereby secretly distinguish between the purpose of his election, and his final rejection or desertion; and between the intentional and decreed virtue of Christ's death to some, and the manifested exhibition, and setting forth of the same only, in the public offer of the gospel, to others: the discovery whereof (especially on the refusers' part) is reserved until the day of the declaration of the righteous judgment of God.

The thought of God's secret decree ought to be so far from discouraging any, that it should rather put the soul upon a diligent attending to the invitation of the covenant of grace; and in so doing, that soul shall, without fail, find the promise, John vi. 37, made good; and his "election made sure," 2 Pet. i. 10.

All that are saved, are saved by laying hold on the revealed will of God. ³ "Revealed things belong to us;" ⁴ and they lie with the same open indulgence to all, where the gospel comes: they are not straitened in themselves, or in the dispensers of them. ⁵ "Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely;" one as well as another. ⁶

I have now reason to bewail the foolish niggardliness of my own heart, and the shyness that is in me, from the abounding freeness that is in the offers and invitations of grace and reconciliation. The good will of the Lord shines forth to the whole world; and, did not the hearts of men hide themselves under a wilful unbelief, and withdrawing from it, it would necessarily shine into them: which ariseth, partly, from a root of wilfulness; ⁷ and partly from the delusion of Satan, who "blindeth the eyes of the mind, that the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ should not shine into their hearts." ⁸ Hence it is that the prophet calls forth, Isa. xlii. 18, "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind;" and again, Isa. xliii. 8, "Bring forth the blind which have eyes, and the deaf that have ears:" as speaking to persons who hide, and withdraw themselves into holes, although the revealed pleasure of the Lord (for his righteousness, and covenant sake) is to make the law of his grace great and

¹ Acts 17: 30. ² Eph. 2: 8. ³ Eph. 3: 5, 6. ⁴ Deut. 29: 29.

⁵ 2 Cor. 6: 11, 12. ⁶ Rev. 22: 17. ⁷ Psalm 81: 11. ⁸ 2 Cor. 4: 4.

large, and himself herein glorious ; as the 19th, 20th, and 21st verses seem to import. The great misery of man lies, not in any difference or inequality in the tender of grace to one more than another, where it is tendered, but in “refusing,”¹ “rejecting,”² “neglecting,”³ “despising,”⁴ and “withdrawing from it.”⁵ And whereas sinful man has will to evil, and to resist good,⁶ and no will to good ;⁷ (“for his very mind and conscience is defiled.”)⁸ This arises not from any defect in the dispensation of grace, but from that captivity to Satan, in which they are held.⁹ Neither is the freedom of the dispensation of grace, held forth to the world, any more hindered thereby, than the sun is hindered from shining, by the defect of sight in a blind man. Neither also can the outward dispensation of grace any more change the heart, than the sun can open the eyes of the blind, without the inward working of the Spirit, which “bloweth where it listeth.”¹⁰ Neither could the opened eye and greatest convictions be of any use, if there were not a dispensation of new-covenant mercy held forth to all men, as the sun which shines in the firmament of the gospel. So that, that which makes an absolute soul-cure, is, the secret working of the Spirit, giving conviction and change to the whole soul, and inclining it to hear and see the good-will of the Lord proclaimed in the gospel ; which is carried (as it were) into the midst of heaven, and enlightens the day of salvation with the excellency of free acceptance to all comers.

Hereby the great hindrance, through doubt and fear of not acceptance, is removed ; for the whole light of the day of grace, which, since Christ ascended, shines forth to all people,¹¹ is acceptation of returning sinners. It is a day formed by the Lord for that very purpose ;¹² a day of remarkable wonder ; Psalm cxviii. 22—24. compared with 1 Pet. ii. 4, 7. which is the very ground of the apostle’s exhortation, “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”¹³ From the womb of this new day, which has visited the earth, is the Spirit sent forth, in the ordinances and gospel-means, to gather the elect seed, as a dew from the Lord ; and to make them effectually to see what is the fellowship of this mystery of good-will to men, and the un-

¹ Acts 7: 57. Isaiah 1: 20. Jer. 9: 6. ² Acts 13: 46. Jer. 6: 19.
³ Heb. 2: 3. ⁴ Rom. 2: 4. ⁵ Heb. 10: 39. ⁶ Jer. 44: 16, 17.
⁷ 1 Cor. 2: 14. ⁸ Tit. 1: 15. ⁹ 2 Tim. 2: 26. ¹⁰ 1 Cor. 12: 11. John
 3: 8. ¹¹ Rev. 14: 6. ¹² 2 Cor. 6: 2. ¹³ Heb. 3: 13—15.

searchable riches of Christ, displayed therein.¹ And thus doth the Spirit, by convictions, and a secret drawing virtue, send away the penitent sinner, by faith, to Jesus Christ, upon the account of the free tender which he makes of himself, in the dispensation of the covenant of grace, which he confirmed in his blood, and caused it to be held forth and preached to every creature.

The Soul yet thirsts and inquires.

Fain would my soul send forth a few meditations more, to spy out this good land; and, oh! let them not return without some grapes, some cheering liquor, as a witness of the fruitfulness of this good and delightful country; where the mystery of truth, pardon, and life doth inhabit to that end.

The Object of Faith's Eye.

My next inquiry is, to know what is the object of the eye of faith, in this general dispensation of grace; and how to exercise the levelling of my eye thereto.

The main tendency of faith is to God himself manifested in the flesh, united to man's nature, and therein doing the whole work of redemption.

This humanizing (as it were) of the Deity, was exerted and put forth, in constituting the Son of God to be the Son of man; whose constitution made him agreeable to his name, Emmanuel, God with us.

In his person, all mediating work is wrought, by taking upon himself the cause of distance, viz. the sin of man, and wrath of God; and the enmity on man's part, and the irreconcilableness on God's part, thereby; for discharging of which, he is made a high-priest, and so he procures it, and maintains it, in the power of a king; and reveals it as a prophet: All which offices he was anointed to, and qualified for, in his own person. And by reason of that essential union with the Godhead in which he stood, the Father delights in, and owns him as the Son of man; and doth every way suit with him, as the father of such a Son, who is both God and man. The Spirit too, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, doth (through the same union of the divine essence) also suit with him, and operate by and through him, as the Spirit of him who is both

¹ Eph. 3: 8, 9.

God and man in one person. Hence arises the perfection and absolute completeness of the mediatorship. I am not alone, (saith Christ,) but I and the Father that sent me :¹ And the comforting Spirit shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you ; John xvi. 14. For the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily ;² and jointly carries on the work of mediatorship : which was personally undertaken by the eternal Son, who is made Emmanuel. And this satisfies the request which Philip made, Show us the Father. Hast thou not seen me ? (saith Christ,) He that hath seen me, (viz. by the eye of faith, as I really am, and ought to be looked upon) hath seen the Father.³ Every action and revelation of himself is the revelation of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the distinguishable working of each person, and yet united in the same God, who worketh all in all.⁴ Christ suffered as the Son of such a Father ; and the Father (in this design of mediatorship) was clothed with a true fatherly relation to the incarnate, suffering Son ; and the eternal Spirit, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, did put forth his almighty essential virtue, in the offering up of the body of Christ upon the cross : which union of Father, Son and Spirit, in God our Saviour,⁵ appears in John xvii. 21. and Heb. ix. 14. taken together. So that all the persons, in the saving of man, do (as it were) concentre, and work together in the person of the Mediator. The will of the Father, John iv. 34. The mercy of the Son, Heb. iv. 13—15. And the power of the Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. and Rom. i. 4. All which being one in the divine essence of God, meet together in the person of the Son, who is, according to the eternal decree, God and man, through his union with and in the Godhead.

God thus manifested in the flesh, and, as Father, Son, and Spirit, laying the foundation of mediatorship in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, God and man, doth also, in and with him, carrying it on, as a father to, and Spirit of him, who is God-man. And for this cause, the gospel is called the word of truth ; not only in respect of the matter of it, but of the legal testimony that it receives from these three witnesses, as the declaration of the counsel of their own essential will and purpose.

¹ John 8: 16.² Col. 2: 9.³ John 14: 7—9.⁴ 1 Cor. 12: 6.⁵ Tit. 2: 13.

And in regard that the Son of God, in the name and co-working of Father, Son, and Spirit, undertook the Mediatorship, by taking Man's nature, every mortal person, that has the nature of man, stands alike near to him, in the dispensation of the gospel-call. It puts aside other mediators: the angels are spirits, and have not human nature, in which to mediate for man: Christ himself is nearer to us than they are; he is man. The spirits of just men made perfect cannot mediate for us; for though they are human, yet they want living bodies: but Christ has his human body with him; and therefore is nearer to men, who are clothed with flesh. Neither can one mortal man mediate as a mediator betwixt God and man; because, though he have the human nature in him, yet it is in him personally, and not representing the whole race of man, as the pure nature of Christ, the second Adam, doth: And besides, mortal man is but man; but Christ is both God and man, that he may lay his hands on both parties, God and man, to reconcile them together, as they are reconciled in the person of the mediator.¹ Promises cannot mediate; for man has no right to them, but through Christ first. Duties cannot mediate; because they are loathsome, without an interest in Christ. Graces cannot mediate, because they are fruits of reconciliation through the Mediator; the fruit cannot be the cause of the root from whence it comes.

So that, as Jesus Christ, in being Mediator, took our nature (*viz.* that human nature that is in every person of mankind) into immediate union with the Godhead dwelling in his person, this same Jesus Christ, God and man (in the relation he bears to the Father and Spirit, and they to him, in their mutual concurrence with him in this great work of his mediation, having sealed and anointed him thereto, that he might completely effect it) is the true immediate object of a believer's eye: and he who, renouncing all other names and helps flees thither, shall be saved by him; for "Every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life."² His appearing in the promises doth make them a convoy to bring the soul to him; which would otherwise, be no better guides, than the light to a blind man. His presence in duties makes them the way and door of approach; which would otherwise be no better guides, by single

¹ Col. 1: 19—22. ² John 6: 40.

gazing on, and using of them, than a lantern in a man's hand, can be a guide by gazing on it, and leading himself round about in a circle, by the light thereof, not minding the way, or the door, to find which that light was appointed and intended. The graces of his Spirit are the beams of that excellency that is in his person, and the streams which flow from the fountain, which are subject to intermission and stoppage, without the constant supply which they receive from the sun and the fountain. And, therefore, a believer's eye and aim must be tending to an immediate fixing upon, and closing with Christ himself, as the proper course and sure way, and only orderly means, to find rest and safety to the soul.

The Aim of Faith's Eye desirous to attain its Mark.

The next considerable thing is, to inquire how the eye of faith is to be levelled at, and exercised upon, this perfect and glorious object, so as to change the soul from bearing the burden of its own guilt, and to get power against the defiling nature and power of sin; and so to carry on the change from glory to glory, after the image of Jesus Christ, by the virtue of his Spirit.¹

The dispensation of the gospel is the glass; and the glory of the Lord there appearing, is that which faith fixeth and feedeth upon. It passeth through the glass, and seizeth upon Jesus Christ, represented therein; and there stays, till it hath enamored the soul into the same likeness. The glory of Christ begets an image of glory in the heart of a believer, of the same nature with itself.

Indeed, there is a transient closing with the promises, as with a neighbor, who can tell where the soul's friend dwelleth; and of this use are the ordinances: and so far the Spirit of the Father lodgeth in them, for the help of the diligent seeker, to draw him to Christ. The first motion also of that diligent seeking proceedeth from the Father, who worketh with the Son, by the Spirit, to draw the soul to the person of the Son, as Mediator; in whom the Father, Son, and Spirit give the soul a satisfactory meeting.²

But the knot of union, by which the soul partakes of the life and glory of God, is not perfectly knit, till the soul actually enters into the fellowship of Christ, the Mediator;³ and

¹ 2 Cor. 3: 18. ² John 5: 17. 6: 44, 45. 14: 23. ³ 1 Cor. 1: 9.

for this very end, serves the preaching of the gospel, in the dispensation of it.¹

The soul being thus ushered in, treats with and fixeth on Christ absolutely and immediately; and lays hold on his personal worth only, as the foundation of its hope and help. The soul has gained a great deal of beauty in Christ's eye, when once it is brought, by his Spirit, to leave its own idols, and forsake its own country, and to trust singly under the shadow of his wings: there blessedness begins, as Boaz said to Ruth.²

And here the soul closeth with the all-sufficiency of the Mediator, pondering the large extent thereof. And whereas the soul is usually more troubled about the aggravations of sin, and the circumstances thereof, than about the sin itself, and for its insincerity, and want of feeling remorse, and sufficient detestation against sin, in its repentance; and is much molested with the stain that guilt leaves on the conscience; and finding, that neither removal of guilt, nor power of cleansing, nor freedom from its just accusation, can be got from the consultations of a wounded spirit, it falls nakedly on the all-sufficiency of the Mediator; and there it beholds him, as one able to take away all sins, in their whole extent. His body was given him for that end: and although his own body was pure, yet it was in the likeness of the flesh of sin, or sinful flesh, and depravation of nature, received from Adam, Rom. viii. 3. that as far as motions of sin, or capacity of sinning, is found in mankind, he did bear the likeness of that state. And so he is called the second Adam: not only as one representing the elect seed of grace, but also as being the superadequate antidote, to conquer and remove all poison that entered upon mankind by the sin of the first Adam. The nature of the second Adam is made as perfectly holy, as that of the first was defiled by sin, and became perfectly sinful, as appears in Rom. v. And in regard that the strength and slaying power of sin lies in the law, his human nature was made under the law, subjected to the whole law, as far as it had to do with sinful man, for this end, that he might redeem them who were under the law, from being under any condemning or accusing sentence, or sting of punishment from thence; which he bringeth about by obeying it, and satisfying for the breach thereof made by sinful man.

¹ Col. 1: 28. 1 John 1: 1—3. ² Ruth 2: 11, 12.

Sin is therefore sin, because it is against the law ; he therefore is made under the law, and that to fulfil its commands, and bear its doom. Though sin be finite in the transgressor, yet is it infinite in respect of the object, the infinite God. But the obedience and suffering of Christ was of an infinite extent, in respect of the person, because it was the act of God-man ; and in the virtue also, because it was a contrived remedy, in the counsel of God's love, to outstretch the injury that was done to the infinite divine majesty, by finite man. Hence it is, that this remedy carries with it the terms of "abounding grace ;"¹ and "unsearchable riches."² The all-sufficiency lies also in this, that it is a free gift, considering that the gifts of God's love are infinite, as his nature is ; the thoughts of which do, by faith, bring in a foundation for infinite justification and righteousness ; and a way is thereby made to the rest of the purchased possession, that lies in the person of the same Redeemer ; the infiniteness of his goodness, and drift in this design, which could never suffer disappointment ; the infiniteness of his wisdom, that could never mistake ; the infiniteness of his love that can never cease ; and the infiniteness of his power, which can never fail.

And since the nature of the salvation of God is infinite, it is brought down into the person of God-man ; and from him into the ordinances ; and so by the Spirit, into the heart of man ; retaining still its infinite nature. In Jesus Christ, the infinite God is made flesh ; in the ordinances, he speaks by man's voice ; in the faith of the heart he dwelleth ; carrying the soul (by the operation of his Spirit, to look upon him, and hear his voice in the steps of his condescension) to the true enjoyment of himself.

Faith taking a right Method.

It is comfortable to have the testimony of a good conscience, and power over corruption and soul-disquiet thereby : but I must not begin there. God begins my righteousness and freedom in himself, and brings it forth in the person of Jesus Christ : I must begin it there also ; and, as it is perfected in him,³ I must perfectly derive it thence, continuing perpetually at that spring,⁴ never expecting to have it mended, by anything I could do, though it were the obeying of the whole law : for

¹ Rom. 5: 17, 20. ² Eph. 3: 8. ³ Heb. 10: 14. ⁴ Gal. 2: 20, 21.

my obedience is but the obedience of a stained nature, that has already broken that righteous law. When the guilt, defilement, and weakness of a foolish, depraved heart, lie upon me as a lump of lead, I get nothing by talking with them; as Solomon saith of the fool, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like him."¹ For this talking with guilt and weakness, draweth my soul (which is made free indeed by the Son of God) to the likeness of that guilt and weakness, and my justified conscience begins again to lick up the old vomit of fear and bondage; but my work is then to cast myself, by naked reliance, on him who "justifieth the ungodly;"² as being compassed about with the guard of God's free, everlasting justification, in the person of Jesus Christ: then, having the shelter of this guard, I may return, and plead with guilt, and hear the complaints of my heart, and the accusations of my conscience, and give them answers from the fulness of Christ's atonement: and thus again: the fool (if such a term may be used in this comparison) is answered, "lest he should be wise in his own conceit:"³ I mean that spirit of bondage, which by the advantage of my own sin, pleads rationally against my peace, till faith comes with the tongue of the learned, and pleads the mystery of free grace, against the plea of reason; and the righteousness of Christ and his holiness, against sin and guilt. Nothing prevailed against Samson till he betrayed the vow of God that was upon him: so, nothing can prevail against the peace of justification, till guilt divide between the soul and naked reliance upon the perfection of Christ's personal sacrifice and mediatorship. The man that lays his foundation thus, will not boast in himself; nor wrong the visits of God's favorable countenance by pride and wantonness; nor yet despair when storms arise; because his foundation is upon a rock, and his safety is not at all of his own handy work. As far as he beholds this all-sufficiency of Christ's mediatorship, the eye affects the heart to security and strength; and crumbles all self-sufficiency to powder; and blows away the Egyptian locusts of guilt and fears into the Red Sea; and restores pacification and quiet to the conscience; and from this glorious sanctuary, the soul comes forth to do the actions of a new life, by the virtue of another Spirit, "the Spirit of love, and of a sound mind;"⁴ and

¹ Prov. 26: 4. ² Rom. 4: 5. ³ Prov. 26: 5. ⁴ 2 Tim. 1: 7.

worketh the works of God in the world ; and takes pleasure in obeying the truth ; and, if it were possible, would actually keep the whole law ; in as much as, being now eternally knit to Christ's person by faith, the law, by the Spirit of Christ, is written in the heart.

This naked reliance on Christ's person, was the great endeavor, and left to us as the experience, of the apostles. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Philip. iii. 8, 9.

A faith of which nature also was exercised eminently by the holy men of old ; Abraham, Rom. iv. 20. David, Psalm lxxi. 16.

There were two fundamental reasons mentioned, why the soul is wholly to cast itself on the naked personal merit of Jesus Christ ; namely, because he began our righteousness, and he only perfected the same for ever ; and those reasons, well weighed, have great strength and virtue in them, to beget faith ; and besides, it is commanded, as the absolute condition of salvation, " Believe, and thou shalt be saved ;"¹ in opposition to which, unbelief is made, in the dispensation of the gospel, the reason of dying under the guilt of sin :² for the gospel doth so perfectly hold out Jesus Christ to be the propitiation for all the sins of the world, through the value of his death, and open freeness of the tender thereof, that the very hinge of salvation and damnation is turned upon the faith of the heart therein, or unbelief thereof, as being the most necessary and suitable requisites, for the stating of the soul into an actual condition of life or death eternally.

Yea, Christ pronounceth forgiveness of sins to the palsied man,³ upon the mere account of believing. And the apostle Paul declares the righteousness of God to be upon all that believe, without making any difference upon any other respect.⁴ This one thing saved the thief upon the cross, when he had not opportunity to make satisfaction for all the wrongs and robberies he had done. This makes the apostle Paul so laborious to preserve this mystery from the least mixture of legal righteousness :⁵ because a believer's state and life is wholly " by grace,"⁶ which entirely treats with the faith of a believer, and not with his works of righteousness or sin : the one cannot help, nor the other hinder ; be-

¹ Acts 16: 31. 1 John 3: 23.

² John 8: 24.

³ Luke 5: 20.

⁴ Rom. 3: 21, 22.

⁵ Gal. 5: 2—4.

⁶ 1 Cor. 15: 10.

cause they are as the elements of another world ; (as they are called, Gal. iv. 3.) and can neither mend nor hurt that justification by Jesus Christ, revealed from heaven to a believer, any more than earthly food can feed a spirit, or a material sword wound an angel. And the reason is, because the person of Christ is the ark, where righteousness and pardon are kept, and conveyed singly, by the Spirit of grace, to faith, (which is the acceptance of the same) and so it is secure from any personal qualifications on man's part to hinder it, where it is by the Spirit of believing accepted, Rom. iv. 16.

This justification of a sinner, by faith in the personal satisfaction and righteousness of Jesus Christ, is that which lays a firm ground for assurance of perseverance ; because the guilt of sin is done away, and pardoned at the first believing on Jesus Christ: and if sins be then done away, their guilt cannot really return ; for "the pardon of sins, and remembering them no more, are joined together:"¹ neither can sins, committed after the soul's conversion to God by faith in Jesus Christ, hazard the final state of such a one ; because his person was made accepted at the first closing with Christ by faith ; and pardon of sins is but the consequent of the acceptance of his person. Ephes. i. 6, 7. So that Christ, having espoused a sinner to himself by faith, washes him from his filth, preserves him in that state through life, and presents him to himself, at length without spot.² And the person being received upon the account of mere grace, sin has no equal plea against such a one, because the strength of his plea must be by the law ; and grace having supplanted the accusation of the law,³ the trial depends in another court, where sin is cast out :⁴ and if sin could not hinder the acceptance of the person at first, much less can it procure a dis-acceptance afterwards.⁵ And besides, the person of every convert is considered (in his true interest through grace) in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom all accusations are fully answered.

Faith having got this foundation, encouragement, and rightful interest to the remission of sins, righteousness, life, and peace, sets itself, by spiritual exercise, to put the soul into sure and quiet possession thereof, in a thorough and di-

¹ Heb. 8: 12. ² Eph. 5: 25—27. ³ John 1: 17. ⁴ Rom. 6: 17, 18.

⁵ Rom. 5: 10.

rect levelling its eye at the object, the person of Jesus Christ: and to that end, it gets the soul up above the reasonings of the old man, (flesh and blood,) into one mount of gospel-reason; and from thence, through the promises, and demonstration of the word of truth by the Spirit, (as through a perspective-glass,) gathers into its eye the lovely view of a complete Redeemer; and gazeth upon him, till the soul is made like the chariots of Aminadab, and is both willingly and safely carried into a holy confidence of the truth of what it seeth; and the truth of its own being comprehended within the reach of the design of God's free mercy, in a way of particular application thereof, and crieth out, "My Lord, and my God."

And oh, that my soul were upon the wings of the Spirit, to ascend by faith into this mount of God, my Saviour! Why abide among the folds of corrupt nature, to hear the bleating of my own confusions and lusts, seeing the sword of the Lord and his Gideon is drawn for my deliverance? Awake, O my heart; awake, O my conscience; shake thee from thy dust; let the testimony of faith, and the Spirit of adoption and freedom lead my captivity captive for ever.

In this glorious work, faith seizeth on the soul, as the angel did seize upon Lot, and (as it were) tear him out of Sodom, with this blessed advantage, that it makes the soul willing, in the day of God's power, to be pulled with violence out of Sodom, out of all its fleshly filth, and fleshly state. It rejoiceth to see the blood of former lusts to be sprinkled on all its raiment: it is wrathful against the enchantments of self-pride, man's applause, carnal reason, earthly compliances, fleshly fears, and distrust: it roars against its sensual mind, and carnal consultations, as a lion over its prey. It unhingeth the gates of its captivity, and carrieth them up to the top of the mount, never to return again. Mighty is this Samson-faith, when its locks of sanctified convictions, and manifestation of grace, are grown up to some happy maturity; it looks further and further after Christ in every scripture; it rejoiceth exceedingly to find the free gift of Christ in such language as this: "I will give thee for a covenant of the people — that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth:"¹ "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved

¹ Isa. 49: 8, 9.

us : ”¹ “ I am he that blotteth out thy sins for my own sake and will not remember them any more. ”²

But the poor soul looks down upon the scars of its own vile heart, and daily weaknesses, and cries out : Oh ! but what are the wounds in my heart and hands, these thorns in my sides, these pricks in my eyes ?

The understanding, triumphing through faith, replies : These are the memorials of the wounds, with which Christ was wounded in the house of his friends, when he came to his own, and they received him not ; and when the sword of indignation awoke against the Shepherd, one who accounted it no robbery to be equal with God ; he then saved the sheep, and, after a sore conflict, slew the wolf, and gathered again the poor of the flock, who were appointed by the law of Moses to the slaughter. Arise, therefore, and be not dismayed at the witnesses of Christ’s agony, which dwell for a season, in thy mortal flesh. The battle was his, not thine : he mortally wounded the dragon, and the God of peace will shortly tread down Satan, and every spawn of him, under thy feet. These enemies are left to prove thy faith, integrity, and patience, that thou mayest learn spiritual war, and be renowned by victory, through the mighty spirit of the Captain of your salvation.

Then faith fixeth its eyes again upon Jesus Christ, through the word, and beholds him as a Lamb that was slain, and yet risen and there sees the grave, where the guilt of conscience was buried, and argueth itself thus into freedom : “ Guilt is destroyed, and none can raise the dead but God only : but God will not raise it up, because he destroyed it himself, that he might marry the justified soul to himself, out of that destruction of guilt and bondage, in the person of his own Son, that he might thereby bring forth life and immortality to sinners, by faith ; ”³ And therefore here faith strives to keep its eye, while hands and feet are working ; and by this compass it steers its course towards the haven of safety.

But the abundant grace, and vastness of this salvation, in and through the person of Jesus Christ, are so great, that my eye is dazzled : I am not able to measure the heavens ; I bring my bucket to hold the sea, and it is drowned in the great waters. And yet here faith has a refuge against con-

¹ Tit. 3: 5. ² Isa. 43: 25. Jer. 31: 34. ³ 2 Tim. 1: 10. Rom. 5: 6.

fusion of mind; viz. when it espies a passive sense in all the justification and acceptation of the gospel, and in all the fruits thereof, working me up to, and making me to be content with a conformity, according to the measure given me to Jesus Christ. Hence are the words discovering it rendered in a passive sense, justified, redeemed, and saved: and the action of this is ascribed only to Christ, or God in Christ, who justifieth, redeemeth, and saveth. And hence also faith giveth the soul relief against confusion of mind, about defect of knowledge, by the thought of this; that though I know little, yet I am known perfectly of God;¹ and though I apprehend little of the great mystery of this salvation, yet "I am apprehended fully by Jesus Christ;"² while I receive him by faith, and am willing to be comprehended, and moulded by his Spirit. It was but a small thing, on man's part, to touch the hem of Christ's garment; yet that being an act of reliance on Christ, and subjecting the soul to him, presently there came in health of body, and pardon of sins, from that comprehending relation in which Christ stood to such a soul.³ The soul's work in faith, or rather, that to which the soul is wrought, is a contentedness to receive the person of Christ by faith, as the sum and title of its interest in more than it can be ever able to receive within its own capacity.

The soul that receives the person of Christ, by one true closing hint, through faith, receives a rightful claim to and property in every excellency and perfection that is in God; laid up in Christ for that end, though the length of that perfection and blessing be never fully known. As a man, who buys a field, (if no exception in the laws of that nation be made) buys all the advantages of that piece of earth, downward to the very centre of the earth, and all between that and the stars, although he really minds no more (it may be,) than the grassy surface of his land, till he discovers some other excellency: then he minds that also, and owns it; whether it be mines of gold or silver, or whatever is in the nature of the earth, which was not known when he bought it; because he bought a right to it, without restriction to any particular quality in it: so is it with a soul, that by faith lays hold on and receives Christ's person; it may be, his eye is chiefly on freedom from the guilt of sin; but in taking

¹ Gal. 4: 9.² Phil. 3: 12.³ Luke 8: 43—48.

the person of Christ, he receives not only pardon, but a true right to whatsoever is in Christ, relating to this life, and that which is to come. The heaven of heavens is not able to contain the utmost of that inheritance which belongs to a believer, because it cannot contain God. This, faith discovers, and cries out, "My lines are fallen in a fruitful place, I have a goodly heritage."

The Influence of Faith into New Obedience.

Faith, being thus mounted, has many advantages; for it is skilful, and therefore victorious. It has the advantage of discovery, for offence or defence: it has champaign ground, and a clear air to breathe in; and so is every way furnished for victory and success.

And as faith is thus fitted, by means of its station and capacity, for discovery; so it lies under the bond of obedience, engaged and commanded to accept and drink in the happiness that lies in Christ. Faith is eminently both a privilege and duty: a privilege, in that it enters on the possession of the whole covenant of grace, and eternal life here upon the earth; and it is bound thereto in point of duty.

In this new world, as it were, of salvation by Jesus Christ, the manifestation of free grace, in the doctrine of Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, etc., doth make the treaty between the spotless purity and sufficiency of Christ's most holy nature, and the natural guilt and lump of wretchedness that has overspread the nature and life of sinful man: which manifestation of Christ presents itself, in a way of cure, to defiled man; and doth in a primitive way, namely, in the very nature of it, require defiled man to be healed. There is virtually, in the very manifestation of the gospel, a command gone forth to lost man to return, and accept the salvation that is thus provided and held forth: besides which, there comes in the next place, a positive command to believe,¹ with many invitations, persuasions and directions about it. The not receiving the former is blindness, the not receiving the latter is more eminently wilful blindness; and both of them wretched impotency, because the letter of the gospel itself cannot quicken. The Spirit of this gospel doth therefore go further, in behalf of the elect, who were peculiarly given to Christ: and presents itself as a quickening power

¹ 1 John 3: 23.

in all the parts of it, and as the real, necessary, and most effectual remedy against all manner of guilt: which also is, in the next place, followed with a law, in the hand of the Spirit, to receive it by faith: this is the quickening virtue, in all invitations and persuasions to receive and apply that glorious remedy. And this is that twofold law which every convert lies under; namely, the manifestation itself, and a spiritual requiring word, commanding the conscience to receive it, and live thereby, through an actually exercised faith. For, as God pursued man's apostasy and disobedience, through Adam, to death and destruction; so he pursueth man's remedy, through the death and sufficiency of the second Adam to justification of life and salvation. In the former, God said, Man must die; in the latter he saith, Man must and shall live; he himself is the commander, and the life and strength of his own commands; in that the "Second Adam is not only a living soul, as the first was, but a quickening Spirit."¹

This command from God in the gospel, to believe, receive, and enjoy pardon and righteousness in Jesus Christ,² even that righteousness and salvation which is laid up in the person of the Mediator, for every one who comes for it,³ and would enjoy the same;⁴ this command, I say, necessarily requires obedience thereto.⁵ This obedience is exercised in a pure and free receiving Jesus Christ as my only Redeemer; as being bought by him, and being made his. I am not my own, I must not measure myself by myself, but by what he is for me, and to me. When the temptations of fear, through my personal guilt, do command me to despair, I must not obey them, but must obey the law of Christ, the "law of faith," as it is called, Rom. iii. 27. When pride of heart, or self-ability, doth command me to boast, I must not obey it,⁶ but must reply, "I am not under the law of my own sin, nor of my own righteousness;⁷ but I am under the law of my own Lord; which is to receive him, and own his righteousness as my own; for he is "the Lord my righteousness."⁸ "When I believe, then I obey;" for I am commanded to believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God; when I cast myself on him that fulfilled the whole

¹ 1 Cor. 15: 45.² Acts 13: 38, 39. 16: 31.

1 John 3: 23.

³ Heb. 7. 25.⁴ Rev. 22: 17.⁵ Rom. 16: 26.⁶ 1 Cor. 1: 29.⁷ Rom. 6: 14. Tit. 3: 5.⁸ Jer. 23: 6.

law, then I fulfil the whole law; when I cast myself on his righteousness, I am, in God's sight, as white as snow; my sins, in this new state, are rather accounted my diseases, than my faults: for if I am not my own, my sins are not my own; but accounted his, "who loved me, and washed me in his blood."

This obedience of faith has the sight of Christ's fulness, and the promises of the new covenant, to lean upon; and so it takes its journey, from flesh to Spirit, from weakness to strength, in the name of the Lord. And from this obedience in believing, proceeds all manner of holiness, as the fruits thereof, which receive their sap from this root: this root makes them to be living obedience, as branches from the same root, children of the same parent. The first subjection is, to the righteousness of Christ's person; to submit all fear and guilt to the fulness of pardon and life that is in him, as the store-house, and there to enjoy it in the enjoying of him: and then, by the Spirit of life which is in Christ, the soul with freedom acts forth answerably, in some measure, to such a renewed state; from whence all actions of holiness are called the "fruits of faith, and fruits of righteousness."¹

One of Faith's Dark Days, and yet Delivered.

After my return from ———, I found sore breaches made upon my soul. My inward man had suffered loss, while I travelled up and down; my soul was violently shaken; the bands of the wicked one conspired with my wicked heart, and carried away my treacherous soul; so that my glory was captivated into the enemy's hand. A wind from the wilderness laid me in confusion; the tempest prevailed, and I suffered shipwreck; all my own feeble endeavors and former meditations gave way, and the raging sea of filthy and foolish thoughts did beat sore upon me; my ship (of former resolutions of heart, and my poor discovery of the salvation of God), was bilged and ready to sink; yet my heart yearned after the Lord, my rock. I cried secretly, though confusedly, to my God, and he yet reserved a plank for my almost drowned soul to swim upon to the shore. He has not utterly removed his mercy from me; he has been yet preaching his own free grace to my soul, through a voice of

¹ Phil. 1: 11. 2 Cor. 9, 10. Col. 1: 6. 2 Pet. 1: 4—8.

thunder and lightning. Let me yet hear thy voice, O Thou Preserver of men ; let me yet gather up advantage through my loss ; help me yet to receive recovering and establishing virtue from my strong-hold. While my thoughts were thus working, I endeavored to get once more into the sanctuary of God ; and there I found, that although I carry about a hell within me, yet that hell cannot devour the infinite covenant of peace which God made. My unbelief and disobedience cannot make the faith of God to be of no effect.¹

I would have lived upon grace and strength received, and I trembled to see those selfish confidences shaken to the earth ; but now (methinks) Christ calls me again from my father's house, and promiseth me a better name than that of sons and daughters of my own, a name in himself, an offspring in himself,² which shall not be cut off. I have had a sentence of death in myself, that I might not trust any more in myself, but in God who raiseth the dead ;³ I am a dry tree ;⁴ but he who was raised from the dead, is a green tree, and in him is my fruit found.⁵

Oh, the mystery and power of this salvation wherewith I am saved ! Oh, that I might pass (as it were) through the eye of a needle, into Christ's power, and there rest from the days of adversity. And the rest is glorious, because it is uncompounded, it receives no ingredients from abroad ; it is singly made up of Christ, and is in him alone. Venture, O my soul, upon this naked arm ; for it is an arm of faithfulness and mercy. This strength alone is a fountain of strength ; this is the river whose streams make glad the city of God. Art thou not willing to be undone, O my soul, that thou mayest be saved ? How long wilt thou set up thy post by the pillars of that salvation which is wrought in God for thee, and wrought in thee by single union with God in Jesus Christ ? Is not his arm stronger than thine ? Be thou translated by faith into divine strength. Let not thy wine be mixed with water. Thy confidences are rejected : make a voyage to the everlasting hills ; enter into the mount of God. Thou hast broken both the tables of the covenant, and yet the Prince of the same covenant lives. Wait for the Spirit to draw it over again and again, by the indelible character of his own finger, who lives to enliven thee forever.

¹ Rom. 3: 3.² Psalm 45: 16. Isa. 56: 5.³ 2 Cor. 1: 9.⁴ Isa. 56: 3.⁵ Hosca 14: 8.

How hard is it to depart from self! from righteous self, and sinful self! I am wounded by sinful self, that I might flee from righteous self and sinful self also, and cast anchor only within the vail, Heb. vi. 19.

I am weary of the instability of the streams; oh, let me go to the fountain. When I am saying, I shall die in my nest, my nest is soon fired about my ears, and turned to ashes. Certainly there is a better rest than this; and it lieth in trusting Christ, and trusting in him only. I both trust Christ, and trust in Christ, when I believe that he is the standard of all saving righteousness communicable to man; and all my righteousness and holiness is but the reflection of his. I trust in Christ, when I lie resignedly at his feet, to be made holy. And whatsoever composure of heart I do at any time receive, I do not, and cannot hold it; but it is held by him while it remains: and when it withdraws, it lives in the root for me. I am ready to think, if I had all graces in my own disposal, I would manage them to the glory of God; but how can God be glorified more, than in a holy content to live at his allowance? All his design is to allure me, and so to force me out of myself, to live in him, as well as to live by him. He bestows his grace within-doors. I must not take his grace to myself, to put it to usury for increase; but must fetch the increase, as well as the principal, from him, by union with him through Jesus Christ: and my work is to rest on his faithfulness, wisdom, willingness, and readiness to supply me; as if every grace of the Spirit were fully in my own management and power, to exercise the same. This is the true life of faith; this is the way of walking up and down in the name of the Lord.¹ When I actually acknowledge every measure of spiritual strength to hold its treasure from Jesus Christ singly and wholly, and rest confidently upon him for it; and that because he hath promised both grace and glory, and every good thing;² judging him faithful who hath promised, and owning him thereupon for my inheritance, and myself nothing but what he for me: then I may be said to trust Jesus Christ, and to trust in him only. I trust him upon his word to be all for me which I would spiritually be; and I trust in him to enjoy the same, through the faith of my interest in him, and his abounding grace and unction.

¹ Zech. 10: 12. ² Psalm 84: 11.

This cuts the heart of self-pride, spiritual surfeiting, and slothfulness, when I live every moment at the mercy of another, even Jesus Christ, both for justifying righteousness, and every influence thereof, by the immediate breathings of his Spirit, according to his good pleasure; having not the power, so much as to make one hair white or black: but I must wholly work by his hands, see by his eyes, and in his light behold the light. What more powerful inducement can there be to self-denial than this? Boasting is excluded, because Christ, in his own person, and by his own Spirit, doth whatsoever is done for me, or in me. Here lies the mystery and labor of faith, which the mere notion thereof can never reach unto, so as to improve the same to a self-denying activity for God, in the paths of godliness and travel towards Zion.

Christ Spiritually, not Personally, communicated to Believers.

There is in our dear Lord Jesus a two-fold excellency to his redeemed, as he is their portion; his essential power, righteousness, goodness, and perfection in the godhead; and his proper human nature personally united thereunto;¹ but neither of these (considered as such) can be communicated unto the children of men: his person cannot be imparted or divided. And there is another excellency flowing from the former, by way of influence and inward virtue, communicated to the hearts of the redeemed by regeneration, which formeth, reneweth, and quickeneth the new man, the new creature in the soul.

The first of these though it cannot (in a strict sense) be communicated, yet it is wholly, by covenant, given to the saints.² So that God, in his vast essential infiniteness, is their God; and his very body that was dead, and is now alive, was also given to the elect;³ and is become theirs by covenant; and they enjoy it in that right, though it remains personally his own, and not theirs, but for them to all eternity; the excellency of which God-man, in the perfection of both natures, is so far reckoned and imputed to them, by covenant-union and mystical ingrafture, as may perfectly deliver them from all evil, and fill them with all righteousness,

¹ Col. 2: 9.

² Isa. 49: 8.

³ Isa. 9: 6.

purity, and perfection, which creature-capacity can take in for the enjoying of the glory of God. So that the person of the Mediator remains distinct from the persons of the redeemed, and they are not mixed, but united, through the Spirit, in the covenant, and in his personal assumption of the human nature, by faith exercised therein.

The Advantages of Christ's being without us Personally, and yet Spiritually in us who believe.

Hence it is, that the interest which the saints have in Christ is enjoyable by them singly, through believing;¹ which enjoyment, through the spiritual nature of the union, is as real, strong, and sure, as whatsoever they enjoy in their own persons, by sense and feeling.²

And thus Christ, as to the perfection of his person, being without us, and above us; and yet, by the communication of the Spirit, through faith, made near to us, and dwelling in us, yields much privilege, and unspeakable advantage, to a believer, namely:—

1. The excellency of a believer's portion in Christ is hereby most distinctly viewed. The soul has hereby room to go round about the unspotted lustre of his person, and view him from head to foot (as the church in the Canticles doth, Cant. v. 10—16.) discerning him as the choicest of ten thousands; whereas the glory of the same Christ, so far as it appears only in the heart by operation, is much dimmed and sullied with the defilement that is there, and continual conflicts; but considering him separated far away from sin and sinners,³ furnished with the utmost perfection, and clothed with garments of complete victory and beauty in the behalf of his redeemed, this fills their heart with joy, and their mouth with singing.

2. He is thereby become also the livelier object of their love; for the eye affects the heart, and nourishes spiritual inflamedness towards him. This desire quickens expectation to rejoice in hope, and leaves no room for a loathing, wearisome fulness in the heart.

3. This objective enjoyment of Christ gives foundation for a kindly refuge in him. It rationally leads the inward man to depart from all other selfs, and run to this objective

¹ Eph. 3: 17.

² Rom. 4: 16. Eph. 3: 17.

³ Heb. 7: 26.

self, Jesus Christ, through the drawing virtue of spiritual union with him :¹ and thus was Christ typified by the cities of refuge.

4. This enjoyment of Christ, by way of object, is also a fountain of recovery when the soul is foiled. It can fetch fresh righteousness, fresh pardon, and be anointed, again, and again, with fresh oil, as David speaks,² yea, every moment, as oft as the heart pants after him.

5. It is also a fountain of ease, by the ability it gives of pouring out a complaint into his bosom. It is a great refreshment to have a friend, to whom one may declare one's misery, were it only to receive pity from his hands ;³ but in Christ, looked upon by faith, there is a power as well as pity to help, be the affliction and burden what it may, and how great soever.⁴

6. It is a fountain also of confidence ; and hence doth the prophet Micah, in the name of the people of God, argue against the triumph of the enemy. "I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation ; my God will hear me. Rejoice not therefore against me, O mine enemy ; when I fall I shall arise,"⁵ etc. And Christ himself doth teach his people confidence by his own example in the day of his suffering, in that his Father was near to justify him.⁶

7. Christ, thus taken up, helps against the solitariness of our journey towards heaven. A believer has a friend to talk with by the way, who is a guide also ; and therefore great is the loss of that man who walks alone, and compasseth himself about with his own sparks ; if he fall (as Solomon speaks) "he hath not another to help him up."⁷ Thus Christ is held forth as a comfortable leader and companion ;⁸ and the church improves this privilege, by "leaning on her beloved," as she comes forth out of the wilderness.⁹ This blessed companion makes way for his people's safety, in the fire, and in the water of affliction."¹⁰

8. By this means also faith has got a true and faithful witness on the believer's side, to clear off accusations : and from hence are those expressions used in the Psalms, "Plead my cause, Be surety for me," etc. And the frequent appeals made to God, who "trieth the heart and

¹ Cant. 1: 4.

² Psalm 92: 10.

³ Job 6: 14.

⁴ Heb. 4: 15, 16. 2: 18. 7: 25.

⁵ Micah 7: 7—9, 19.

⁶ Compare Isa. 50: 8, 9, with Rom. 8: 33, 34.

⁷ Eccl. 4: 10.

⁸ Isa. 57: 18. Jer. 3: 14.

⁹ Cant. 8: 5.

¹⁰ Dan. 3: 25. Isa. 43: 2.

reins, and who standeth up on the side of his people, and on their behalf."

These and infinitely more privileges do arise to every believer, from the interest that he hath in Christ's entire and incommunicable person, by the union of free covenant and mystical ingrafture, and the communion of virtue derived from the person of this Mediator; in which mystery of grace he enjoys Christ as the hand enjoys the head, yet both of them are distinctly considered in the body: or as the eye enjoys the influence and virtue of that light and heat which is in the very body of the sun, although the body of the sun be many thousand miles distant from that eye which doth actually enjoy that sun in the light and heat of its influence; and it doth as truly enjoy it, as if it lay in the material body of the sun, and in a way of greater advantage, fitted for its capacity and use. So is the person of Christ enjoyed really and truly with all privileges relating to believers, while he retains his personality uncommunicated and undivided to any other; as the very water of the fountain is enjoyed in the stream, and the sap of the root is enjoyed in the branches; and yet the stream is not the fountain, nor yet the branches any part of the root.]

Christ's Entrance upon the Heart works Renewing there.

The way of the soul's enjoyment of Christ in all the privileges of his person, and offices of his mediatorship, and in all the influences of spiritual unction, and transformation of the heart into the power and likeness of Jesus Christ, is wrought by the Spirit of regeneration, through faith; which causeth the soul to pass over from itself, from all its strength, from all its own carnal hope, fear, and selfish care, into the death, life, righteousness, and perfection of the person of Jesus Christ: and so is enabled to say in truth, "I am not mine own; I live; yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," namely, by the very life, and in the very life of Christ, apprehended, received, enjoyed, and working effectually in me by faith in him "who loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood."¹

This is that translating, renewing, changing, and quickening work, which the scripture doth so often mention as the

¹ 1 Cor. 6: 19. Gal. 2: 20. Rev. 1: 5.

design of the gospel. And it is with reference unto this, that Christ is called a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence. Sinful and selfish nature strives to preserve its life against the killing virtue of the Spirit of Christ in the gospel preached to the world. This is the reason of so much carnal profession and barrenness in Christianity, when the hearts of men turn the nature of the gospel, which is a law of grace, and obeyed only by faith, into the similitude of the law of Moses, and make it a matter of man's working, and subject it to the poor and lame endeavors of unrenewed man; not remembering, or not understanding, that the tree must first be made good, before the fruit can be good. This was meant by the apostle when he bewailed the Jews; who, though they "followed after righteousness, attained it not, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law."¹ Ever since the fall of man, righteousness forsook the created nature of man; (which is largely showed, Rom. iii. 10.) and is only now in Christ revealed from heaven, in receiving of whom, by being baptized spiritually into his death and life, his righteousness is enjoyed.

Every command of the gospel doth first require faith, which is the great commandment; and, in the virtue and power thereof, requires and works holiness in all the fruits of a new life, by the virtue of Jesus Christ, working in every precept and command of God in the whole scriptures, being gospelized by his Spirit.

And here my heart begins again to groan, while I find so little of this killing, renewing power accomplishing its work upon me. How far am I from this renewed state! I am weary of the lifeless notion of the thing. I faint in my sighing, and find no rest. I long for the breath of the Lord, and thus lament out my complaint before him: "When will the Lord come into his temple? My flesh trembleth betwixt hope, fear, and desire: I am as a bottle dried in the smoke: my heart is pained and in travail. O, Preserver of men, make no tarrying, lest I be like them who go down to the pit. O, let death feed upon me, till the foundation of life, power, and peace, be laid in my soul, and deliverance come from another place. Droopings are deadly, O, my soul. Do not say, thy wound is incurable; the Creator of the ends of the earth doth undertake for thee; he will yet reveal abund-

¹ Rom. 9: 31, 32.

ance of truth and peace. Come, then, O Fountain of help, and do thine own will upon me."

How easy is it to say the word, renewing, in comparison of having the thing really executed and done !

All that can be spoken about it is but words ; the change itself is the thing I long for. Mine eyes fail with hoping for the salvation of God in this work. O that the heavens might drop down their dew ! Why are the influences of the clouds withheld ? O, for the sounding of his bowels who is gone into a far country, and has promised to return ! My musing heart cannot fetch him, but my groaning is before him, and the tears and cries of my soul are in his sight. Let the cry of my distress be heard : anguish is upon my heart, and let the season of my redemption come !

According to the measure of the power of Christ given to me, I would yet struggle against this giant, unmortified self. I would rather take a sling and a stone in the power of Christ, than all the weapons of a carnal arm and understanding.

Christ well knew the length of that petition, Thy will be done, when he taught his disciples that prayer. Could I but pray this prayer in the latitude of it, I should think my foot within the threshold of heaven.

The Blessedness of a mortified Understanding and Mortified Will.

The main gospel-killing work lies in mortifying the understanding and the will, into the wisdom and dominion of the Spirit ; and, as my present controversy is with my own carnal will, I would deal with that first, were not my unmortified understanding in the way.

My unmortified understanding can easily dally with all the notions about the Trinity, law and gospel promises and covenant, faith, and every grace of the Spirit, and every duty of godliness, and yet but trifle all the while. The renewed understanding sucks in the lively evidence of the mind of God in all those things, and is called the demonstration of Spirit and power,¹ and the very mind of Christ.² This mind of Jesus Christ represents to faith the infinite God wrapped up in every particle of his word, and is the

¹ 1 Cor. 2: 4.

² 1 Cor. 2: 16.

spirit of every revealed truth. Hence comes that expression, "you have not so learned Christ."¹ A renewed understanding is not taught by words and sentences, be they what they will, and though ever so good; but by the mind of God and Christ in them.² The whole volume of the scriptures is but a small hint, as it were, of the immeasurable will of God. And this is the reason why the scriptures, though the words are the same, and not altered, do yet, by the Spirit, speak variety of instructions in the unity of the same truth, as the Spirit pleaseth to reveal itself therein; which doth not at all argue defect in the Scriptures, but infiniteness in the mind of Christ therein contained.

This fulness of the mind of Christ in the word is that which makes it divide between the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow; and to be a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.³

A renewed understanding makes use of the word, and all the expressions therein, but as the door by which to enter into the whole vision of God in Jesus Christ, and the revelation of his will; and so takes up the truth truly, in the method in which the infinite God is pleased to reveal it.

A renewed understanding sees the mystery of truth to be substance and life, through that report of it which words do speak. It converseth with life through the conduit of words, phrases, and terms: it gives way to the truth as it is in Jesus, by believing, and not mangling it with carnal reason; and so makes way for the renewed will to give obedience by believing, doing, and suffering the pleasure and will of God.

The renewed will is one with God's will in a way of submission thereto. It lies down broken-heartedly in the pleasure of God: it is zealous in obedience, secure in believing, quiet in suffering, because the will of God reigneth, and cannot be disappointed: it makes the soul in every thing give thanks, and rejoice evermore: it grieves where the holy Spirit is grieved, and it delights where God delights. If God say to Abraham, Offer up Isaac, he doth it with joy; reluctance is gone, because the will of God dwells in the renewed will, and the consultations of flesh and blood are mortified. It grieves for sin, because it crosseth the revealed will of God: and yet rejoiceth in hope, because

¹ Eph. 4: 20.

² Eph. 4: 21.

³ Heb. 4: 12.

all things shall work together for good to them that love him.

The renewed will is always renewing itself by faith in Christ, and looking into the law of liberty. It thanks God heartily for life, death, health, sickness, success or disappointment, in high degree or low degree ; because it is baptized into his will. And that the nature of this new creation in the will may provoke my heart to withdraw from the servitude of my corrupt will, I would ponder the nature of it a little further.

The first parent of the grace of adoption by Jesus Christ was the good pleasure of the will of God in his decree ;¹ and actual conversion by the word is the operation also of the will of God,² which bringeth forth a birth in the new man of the same likeness ; Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Psalm cx. 3. And by this willingness the truth of all obedience is measured.³ It is also the first thing the spirit of God hath in his eye, and which doth, in a way of acceptance, fill up the defect of all other service.⁴

The state of death in sin is captivity to the will of Satan and the flesh ; and subjection to the will of God is the first-born from the dead. It first appears and so goes on, as the living token of true Christianity, and never ceaseth till it is filled with the fulness of God who brought it forth ; and so it is the undoing principle to flesh and blood, and captivates fear, care and bondage into the liberty of Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God ; and makes Christ and a believer no longer twain, but one in the union and operation of the Spirit ; whereby the dominion and sure protection of God secure the soul as the waters cover the sea. Here I stick, and here I groan : Alas, alas, for this day of the Lord ! Oh, for this day-spring from on high, to reveal this light and breath, in the life of this renewed understanding and will, from the bowels of his own grace and Spirit ! I am sick ; yea, I am sick ; my pen shakes, my heart quivers with desire after this renewing work. Give way, O carnal mind of unbelief, darkness, sin and vanity, that my heart may faint away into the bosom of this changing power of the Spirit of Christ who has redeemed it.

¹ Eph. 1: 5. ² James 1: 18. ³ Isa. 1: 19. ⁴ 2 Cor. 8: 12.

The Use of the Scriptures.

The glorious work of renewing the mind is carried on by the eternal Word of God, by which he made the world. All creating work is effected through the eternal Word, the Son of God, by the eternal Spirit, from the everlasting Father; in which God is all in all. The eternal Word hath declared himself by a word of faith, reconciliation, and comfort, contained and expressed in a way suitable to the capacity of human sense, reason and understanding, in the scriptures, that so the incomprehensible will of God might look into the heart of man, through the inlets of natural sense, and the faculties of natural mind, making them subservient in this renewing change.

Therefore it is made visible to the eye, and receivable by the ear, retainable by the memory, and meditable by the heart, in the use of the scriptures; and so doth, in a rational way, by reproofs, instructions, convincements, and comforts, bring forth the new creature, and hold it in a spiritual union and fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit, through a daily increase, tending to the last and perfect fulness.¹

And that Jesus Christ may make this his expressed word effectual to accomplish the design of his love to the souls of his redeemed, he guides them by his Spirit to the most advantageous improvement thereof, that not one jot or tittle of his word may be lost.

The whole scriptures are the inspiration of the "Spirit of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ,"² given to reveal the way of salvation; which is carried on by a way of history and doctrine; in both which the state of mankind is discovered, in reference to its innocency, fall, and recovery. The state of innocency and the fall comprehended all mankind in the persons of Adam and Eve; the state of recovery respects only a part of mankind saved out of that universal loss, by Christ, according to the election of grace, and therefore he is called the "second Adam,"³ who infuseth the gift and operation of righteousness to his seed, as the "first Adam" had infused the guilt and enthralling, corrupting power of sin into his seed. As the fall was a perfect fall, so

¹ Col. 2: 19. Eph. 1: 23.

² Heb. 1: 1. Col. 3: 16. 2 Tim. 3: 16.

³ Rom. 5: 14. 1 Cor. 15: 45.

the recovery (to the remnant recovered) is a perfect recovery, completed fully in God's decree before the world was,¹ and actually solemnized at Christ's suffering;² which becomes applicable to every individual person of that number by the Spirit of faith and holiness; and whereby they are fully and really freed from the matter of guilt through union with Christ; albeit the afflicting sense and fear of guilt appears many times, through the weakness of faith in that union; and, through the encumbering defilement of sin in those who are redeemed, holds on a conflict in the flesh, till the last enemy, namely, death, be destroyed: and so mankind stands divided; the persons of them who only bear the image of the first Adam (corrupted by the serpent's poison), and they who bear the image of the second Adam; and, in the latter division, every redeemed person carries also a subdivision in his own heart for a time, namely, the grand principle of his renewed state, and the afflicting stain and enmity of the first Adam's nature remaining in the flesh. And in reference to these two contraries, (namely, the good and bad persons of mankind, and the different principles of good and evil), the scripture doth display all the threatenings and comforts, reproofs and encouragements, judgments and promises, instructions and rebukes, that are found in that blessed volume, with manifestations of God's power and goodness to the one, and of his power and wrath against the other.

So whatsoever is spoken of any one person, is spoken of all persons, in the same state; and whatsoever is spoken of any action or qualification in any person, is spoken of like actions and qualifications in every person, who is in the same state, to the end of the world; even as long as mankind remains. And as far as the line of each state (whether it be good or bad) reacheth; so far doth every person, continuing in that state, bear his proportionable share through the grave to eternity.

When the Spirit of God speaketh anything in the word, it first looks through the state in which any person is, and so deals with that particular person according to the state in which he is, whether it be a state of sin or grace, and so acts towards him according to the rules and method of such a state. Hence it is, that comforts, or afflictions, or teachings, that are one and the same in their own nature, are exceed-

¹ Eph. 1: 4.² Col. 2: 14, 15.

ingly different in the end and use which the Spirit makes of them, through the different states of light or darkness, life or death in which all men lie; so that by this means the same word is a savor of life to one which is a savor of death to another.

The general threatenings against ungodliness concern every particular ungodly man. The particular punishment inflicted upon any one ungodly man, shows what is equally due to the rest of ungodly men. And although one evil man may not commit the same wicked action as another doth, yet he has the nature, and the same evil state, which is the root of that action; and as it brings forth actions equivalently evil, it is by the Spirit of God equally sentenced to punishment.

And as, in all visible actions, the state of the person is (in the scriptures) first considered; so, in all actions, the nature and spirit of that action (as it holds relation to the state of the person acting), is regarded by the Spirit of God in the word, before the action itself, and involves every one within the guilt of that action, if it be wicked, or within the blessing of that action, if it be good, in whom the nature and spirit of such an action worketh. From this ground Christ calls wicked anger, murder; and unchaste lustings, adultery:¹ and from this ground a gracious desire and intention has the blessing of a gracious action.² And when the action is one and the same, and yet the spirit and inward mind of them who execute that action different, the action is not accounted the same, but different; as in the case of Cain's killing Abel, and Phinehas's killing Zimri; it was murder in the one, and righteousness in the other. So that actions may agree, and yet the spirit of that action in the actors, not agree: and the spirit of one action may agree with the spirit of another action, or the spirit of one that acts may agree in some particular action with the spirit of another who acts the same thing, and yet the difference of their grand state disagree; as appears in the case of David's uncleanness through lust, and the sin of his son Amnon; for the repentance and recovery of the one are recorded, but not of the other.

So that in the use of the scriptures, we are to consider how far actions agree, and how far the spirit, or immediate

¹ Matt. 5: 21, 22, 27, 28. ² 2 Cor. 8: 12.

inward working, which produceth actions, agrees, and how the grand state of persons doth agree, that we may know how to make use of the reproofs and punishments, promises and rewards, that we find given to others in scripture.

As concerning the state of godliness, there is no one godly man who has any peculiar privilege, which is not common to all who are in the same state, because the covenant is made to them all alike in Jesus Christ ; in whom God is become their God, upon the equal terms of free grace ; and Christ is as well the head of one member, as of another ; and all the privileges which can flow from such a common relation run down of right to every person within that relation ; namely, justification, adoption, reconciliation, sanctification, preservation, instruction, and such like operations of the Spirit, that issue from that relation, and which tend to a living enjoyment thereof, and the advancing of that state to perfection. All commands, also, and duties bear with them an equal engagement to every person, alike related, within the state of covenant interest ; because those commands and duties relate to the same interest, in which all the people of God are one.¹

So that this interest in God, which is helpful in one case, is applicable to all like cases, wherein the saints, who enjoy that interest, are concerned : which makes every promise to have a kind of infiniteness, as God is infinite. From this ground, the same promise that armed Joshua against fear, through the presence and faithfulness of God, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,"² is used likewise to every saint, to arm him against covetousness, and fear of want.³

And thus the experience of one saint becomes advantageous to another, through their mutual interest in the same root of spiritual life in Christ, by which they are one with him, and co-partners, each with other, of the same grace. From this ground there is no member of Christ that can say, he hath not need of another's help ; because the Spirit of God, by which they are united into one body, conveys its operation through one to another, as it pleaseth him ;⁴ which Spirit of God is the new life of the weak, as well as of the strong, as he pleaseth to manifest his power and virtue in the one or the other, more or less, by which they are strong or

¹ John 17: 20. Matt. 28: 20.

² Josh. 1: 5.

³ Heb. 13: 5.

⁴ 1 Cor. 12: 11.

weak; that so, they might love, pity and sympathize each with other, being all interested in the same life, and whereby they are all one body, and members one of another.¹

Hence it is, that all things spoken in the scriptures are of true and proper use to every child of God, as far as their condition agrees with, or stands in need of, that help, comfort, counsel, or reproof, mentioned there; which is the scope of the Spirit of God in all those promises, instructions, or reproofs, recorded in the scriptures; as if they, and their particular cases, had been first or only in the eye of God, when that word was spoken, or that instance given, be it what it will. What I say unto you (saith Christ speaking to the twelve²) I say unto all, Watch; for whatsoever things were written afore-time to others, were written for our learning (as the apostle tells the church of the Romans, Rom. xv. 4.) that we through patience, and comfort of the same scriptures, might have the same enjoyment and ground of hope as they had, being equally interested in the same God, who by his Spirit breathes the influence of the same grace of patience and consolation, as he did to them to whom the Spirit, through the scripture, had formerly spoken. And thus the same word, being the inspiration of the Spirit, bloweth where it listeth, and the sound thereof is gone forth into all the world, and the spirit, drift, scope, and use of the words of life, to the end of the earth; so far as the Spirit which breathed it begets any soul into the life of union with God in Jesus Christ, who is the eternal Word, and mind of the eternal Father; from whom all the children of adoption receive their being and birth, through the gospel of that only begotten Son of God, spiritually shed abroad into their hearts. So that every one who is Christ's may say, The history of the scriptures is for me; the prophets are mine; the apostles are mine; and all their prophecies and preachings; all promises, reproofs, and comforts, counsels, warnings, and examples; the gospel under Moses' vail, and as it shines in the teachings and miracles of Christ and his apostles; all things, all persons, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, life and death, are the inventory of my happiness; things past, present, and to come, are mine, and for my use and advantage; because the Spirit which worketh in and by all these is mine; and Christ, to whom I come, and whom I serve, is mine;

¹ Rom. 12: 5.

² Mark 13: 37.

and Christ is God's; and his God and Father is mine, because I am his, heir and co-heir with him.¹ Let such a privilege cause the soul to cry out, Breathe, O Spirit; open yourselves, O blessed scriptures, and water me with all manner of teaching: let mysterious grace possess my understanding; powerful wisdom from God, in the scriptures, make me wise to salvation: let strength and virtue from on high renew both spirit, soul, and body to all power of a spiritual mind; that I may comprehend with all saints what is the height, length, depth, and breadth of the love of God in Christ; and be built amongst them, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ himself being my corner-stone; and his power enlivening me to every good word and work, through that common salvation wrought by him, for every member of his body; among whom I also am allowed to claim my share in the inheritance of light, through the faith and patience of the scriptures, and testimony of Jesus, my Lord.

Abraham's faith was exercised upon the covenant which God made with him, saying, I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed: which faith was further confirmed by the sign of circumcision that was added to that covenant, and tried yet further, by offering up his Son; in all which he had the faithfulness of God, and his free grace and power, in his eye, and saw Christ's day afar off therein; although it is probable he saw not distinctly the very manner of Christ's coming in the flesh, and the manner of his death and resurrection; yet his faith in the substance of the covenant of God's free grace, and in his wisdom and power to accomplish the same in his own way and time, led him to embrace that covenant (so dispensed, and to that measure discovered), deriving interest in God to his soul, and the righteousness of justification thereby; which the Spirit doth record in the scriptures to be the same justifying exercise of faith, which in the fullness of time should, and so did more distinctly put forth itself upon Christ, dead and risen, and upon the power and truth of God therein, to confirm and actually execute, in the person of Christ, the branches and method of that covenant, relating to the taking away sin, applying righteousness, and uniting man to God in the mystery of grace and salvation: and therefore it is said, the same righteousness is now impu-

¹ 1 Cor. 3: 21—23.

ted to believers as was to him ;¹ because the nature of their faith, and the substance of the object of that faith, are one and the same. In the exercise of which they walk in his steps ;² and so are justified with believing Abraham, and inherit his blessing.³

And thus the scriptures, in the spiritual use thereof, do run through all visibly different dispensations, administrations, instances, and cases of the saints, with one and the same invisible scope, and secret tendency ; agreeable to the state of godliness, and relating to all persons within that state, in all times and ages ; and stand answerable to the nature of all future cases and experiences of the saints ; which makes the whole scriptures which were written aforetime, to be of a perpetual present use, from the beginning to the end of that volume. So said Moses of old :⁴ and so said John many hundred years after.⁵ So that all scripture is given for a perpetual profit, by doctrine, reproof, exhortation, and instruction in righteousness, in order to the perfecting of the saints.⁶

And this brings in again the consideration of the wonderful condescension of God, who, though he be invisible, yet doth (in a sort) become visible in the word. There the life of God is manifested, even that hidden life which enlivens the new man ; it exposeth itself to be seen, heard, and handled by the thoughts of worm-like man.⁷

God, who was pleased to manifest himself in the flesh, has carried on a correspondent method, in a way suitable to humanity, ever since the restoration was promised to the seed of the woman. The Spirit brings forth all its special operations, in the exercise of man's nature, reason, understanding, will, affections, and passions. The scriptures seem to bespeak nothing, oftentimes, but mere man ; whereas that human way was only fitted as a sheath for the sword of the Spirit to be carried in, through all several cases that could fall out in man's condition. God, who brought forth all things out of himself, doth still manage them, and uphold them ; for he is the life. As his purpose and power created the being of all things, so his providence and wisdom do create the continual disposing and ordering of all things ; "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing," saith the Lord :⁸ and, therefore, having created

¹ Rom. 4: 23-25.² Rom. 4: 12.³ Gal. 3: 8, 9.⁴ Deut. 4: 2.⁵ Rev. 22: 18, 19.⁶ 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.⁷ 1 John 1: 1-3.⁸ Isa. 65: 18.

a new thing in the earth, that a woman should compass a man,¹ he works creatingly in the discovery and application of that mystery, and stoops down into all the senses, passions, and affections of human nature, and brings forth the mystery of the new creation, under the veil and external use of the matter of the first creation ; which runs through the history of outward providences ; and through every branch of Moses' law, in all the sacrifices, every part of the tabernacle and temple, and through every dispensation, and among all the faculties of the rational soul, as the power of life striving against death, and light against darkness ; which is the scope of what we find spoken to man, or of or by man, in the scriptures : which is spoken, not to show only what man's natural thoughts are, but how the Spirit of God works in their thoughts, words, and actions, or how the spirit of Satan naturally and sinfully works in them ; which is delivered to us by the Spirit of God, sometimes by the rules of doctrine and worship, sometimes by comforts, instructions, exhortations, reproofs, and threatenings ; and sometimes by examples and experiences, acted upon the person of good and bad, and acting in them.

This operation of the Spirit of the Father and the Son begets all the convincements, heart-searchings, prayers, groans, cries, sighs, comforts, encouragements and conquests, which we find exercised in the hearts of the people of God, throughout the scriptures ; shewing, as in a glass, the combat betwixt the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman ; and establishing faith, and assurance of the victory by Jesus Christ, who is the Captain of their salvation.

And God has recorded these things, in this manner, in the word, that all the people of God may read the whole of their present state and work acted in the scriptures, by the inspiration of the Spirit, which now breathes workings of a like nature in their hearts. The least groan cannot be lost, it is part of the Lamb's war ; and therefore there is a blessing in it. If the infinite purity, power, and holiness of God did reveal themselves only to the understanding, they would either distract and confound the soul, or harden it by absolute despair ; and therefore the infinite excellency of God descends into the human nature of Christ, that it might overshadow, and work in the hearts of the saints, (who are of

¹ Jer. 31: 22.

his mystical body) by the Spirit in the scriptures, in the way of an instinct and new principle arising from that spiritual closure made betwixt him and them in the gospel.

The Glory of Christ's Condescension.

The rejection of the gospel, and despising of the word, do chiefly arise from an aptness to stumble at the condescension of God. He sees a necessity to bow down lower to save poor man, than the pride of man's heart knows how to digest; and therefore the humble and contrite ones get most of his company.¹ The soul who loves him, and believes his condescension, in the design and truth thereof, can never be too low for relief.

The manner of Christ's coming into the flesh, and the despicableness of his person, in his life and death, seriously considered, and the ordinances which he blest and left to us, give no encouragement to the wisdom of the flesh. The way of carnal wisdom is to do great things by great means, but the wisdom of God doth great things by small and despicable means;² and so confoundeth the wisdom of the wise; as the apostle argues, 1 Cor. i. from verse 20th forwards. Were the truth of this mystery of God's condescension truly taken up, it would cure that repining dejection which torments the saints about their unworthiness; and thankfulness would accompany all their groans towards him. He is as low as the lowest, and their way cannot be hid from him, though he be high and lofty, and the Creator of the ends of the earth.³ The very kernel of the gospel's glory lies in the extremeness of his condescension in the way of saving man. His design is to exalt his glory to the highest heavens, by the unspeakable lowness of his stooping, throughout all the day of grace. He doth, by his Spirit, wait, weep, strive, grieve, sigh, suffer, and complain in the hearts of his people; figuratively, he is said to do such things also himself on their behalf; their weak faith is mighty through him who works it, and who carries his lambs in his arms. His infinite greatness is not at all the cause of any estranged distance betwixt him and mankind in this day of grace; but the carnal and unbroken pride and fulness of a self-righteous, care-

¹ Isa. 57: 15. ² 1 Sam. 16: 6, 7.—Ps. 78: 70, 71. 2 Kings 5: 10–13.

³ Isa. 40: 27–29. 57: 15.

less, ignorant, unbelieving heart. He setteth the solitary in families, and stoopeth down to bring out those who are bound with, and sensible of, their chains ; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.¹

Oh, let this truth visit me, and save ! Here is a rest indeed, O my confused heart ! He that heard the moan of Ephraim,² hears thy moan ; hears thy cries, picks up all thy tears, and puts them in a bottle of remembrance :³ he created jewels for himself out of the dunghill, and rakes them together into his cabinet.⁴ When thou faintest, he fainteth not, Isa. xl. 27—31. Lie down upon him, view the travail that he hath made in the person of Christ, and in the word of his grace throughout the scriptures, and say, how unsearchable are his understanding and condescension ! How undeservedly, how almightily, how completely, freely, and thoroughly, am I called by his grace, and led along this present wilderness by the right-hand of infinite care, power, and condescending, compassionate faithfulness ! Oh, the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God in the riches thereof ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things : to whom be glory forever.⁵

*God in Jesus Christ the only Life and Breath of his People,
and the Advantage thereof.*

Although God has laid the foundation of faith ever so sure in the person of Christ, and so in himself, as it stands revealed in the scriptures ; and although the principle of believing be planted in the heart at the first converting-work, and covenant-closure with Jesus Christ ; yet every acting of faith is still kept in the power of his own will, and lies locked up from any exercise, till he opens his hand, and fills the soul with good things. And this God doth for singular ends, viz. :

1. That God might be truly all in all, and all in every part ; that his people might be rich, and yet none of them be able to say, “ My goods are increased ; I have need of nothing ; ”⁶ that he may appear to be, not only the author of their life, but of the breathing of their breath also ; and

¹ Psalm 78: 6.

² Jer. 31: 18.

³ Psalm 56: 8.

⁴ Mal. 3: 17. Psalm 113: 5—8. ⁵ Rom. 11: 33, 36. ⁶ Rev. 3: 17, 18.

that the whole life of the new creature might not be at the least distance from the heart of Christ. As the flame of the candle cannot live without the wick, so is it impossible that faith, or refreshment of heart, can live one moment, without supply of radical moisture decending from the head, Jesus Christ. Which doth not at all show the uncertainty of a believer's state, but rather tends to assure the same, by a frequent sending the soul to God in Christ, by whom it is established.

2. It gives check to all allowed sin, and turning the grace of God into wantonness; because he will not suffer the refreshment of his grace to be any where, but where he himself is.

3. And, as breathings are tokens of life, so do renewed influences witness the reality of life arising from the union of the soul with Christ.

4. It also tends to make the soul watchful against distance from Christ, lest the breath of life withdraw, and the soul faint insensibly, and fall into the mire of a defiled mind, and so into sinful actions and a wounded conscience.

5. It leaves no room for sloth, or sleepiness of heart; lest the locks of communion with God's influential presence should be cut, and strength be gone;¹ for no comfort or strength lives any longer, than by faith it derives vigor from the heart and mind of Christ.

6. It represents mercy purely, as it showeth, that the standing of a believer is merely at the good pleasure of God, and doth necessitate the soul to be a resigned attendant upon the mere will of God; and so allures the soul, by a necessary conquest of love, not to live to itself, but to the pure will of him who died, and rose again, and quickens all things. By which resignation unto mercy, it rests on the heart of Christ, and all the fulness of God that is there.

7. It gives ground of hope in sad hours; for, as the clouds come, so they go. "There is hope of a tree (saith Job), though it be cut down, that it will sprout again, through the reviving moisture at the root."² "And why art thou disquieted?" saith David to his soul; "I shall yet praise him."³ And besides,

8. This coming and going of the Spirit's influence is a fan, which blows and brings forth the lustre of all graces. Here-

¹ Judges 16: 19, 20.

² Job 14: 7—9.

³ Psalm 43: 5.

by patience, waiting, and hope are exercised; faith and love are exercised; and every grace gets (as it were) a frequent new birth in the soul; and the spiritual fondness of the love is revived, and not suffered to die. Every new breath of the Spirit is a new application of the soul's ingrafture into Christ, and demonstration of his power; and it is arrayed afresh, as in the day of its first espousals.

9. And lastly, it gives assurance of the resurrection of the body, of which every resurrection by faith and hope, freely visiting the heart, and bringing it again to God, is the fore-runner.

While my meditations are musing and expatiating after the invisible God, and would fain comprehend his way, methinks I receive a check from Zophar,¹ "Canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" Keep within the revealed word, and, in the patience and comfort of the scriptures, live by hope. "No flesh can see God and live." Vain man would be wise, and see the upshot of all things, but the vessel of his understanding cannot hold it. Salvation by Christ has one sort of raiment here, another kind hereafter; here, it is a kingdom of patience and hope, but there, a kingdom of glorious enjoyment; here is the earnest, there is the fulness. When I would look over, and see some glimpses of Canaan, a Jordan of difficulty stands in the way. What an adventure is it, to go down into the deep of death, and the last concluding change! This is the last and great trial of faith, to venture all my hope in eternity at one cast; to expect to find the same God in Christ beyond the great gulf, who appears on this side by the Spirit of his grace; to enjoy the same God to perfection, whose name I now call upon by prayer. O that victorious faith which claspeth about that love, from which neither life nor death, things present nor to come, can divide!² I may not presumptuously go up into the mount, but be content awhile with wilderness-work; there remaineth a rest. Return again, O my soul, to thy laboring, waiting state; be upon thy watch, the morning cometh by and by. Be not afraid to have thy night changed into day, and all thy weakness into perfection; only labor out thy task, and "work out thy sal-

¹ Job 11: 7, 8.

² Rom. 8: 38, 39.

vation with fear and trembling" in this day of faith and hope.

Am I called to work and travail? How shall I undergo this task? Contemplation is not the only work of my twelve hours; and oh, for freedom of heart and understanding, that I may accomplish my work, my hireling's day! Alas! dear Christ, I am willing to work thy works, but would never be out of thy sight. May I not talk with thee, and look upon thy face, and yet work too? The presence of my Christ makes any toil to be perfect freedom.

Methinks I can more easily find, in some measure, my work throughout the whole scriptures (though that necessarily requires also the teachings of the Spirit), than I can know how to compose my heart to keep the faith of union and communion with God fresh; and so to work and labor, in the strength of that fellowship, whatever I do in the world. When I am earnest in contemplation, I fear I fail in the matter of action; when I am acting, I fear losing the marrow of my communion with my God. Here lies divine skill, to put both these together, as being of the same nature, and tending to the same end; each of them helping, and not hindering one another. And to this end I desire help from on high, to find out my way and method, that I may so run, that I may at length finish my course with joy.

How to hold Communion with God in Worldly Business.

The spring of all christian conversation is justifying faith, which cleanses the soul, and quickens it at the same time, by union with Jesus Christ: and as, in the order of nature, life is first infused, before any action of life can appear; so faith, being the accepting and digesting virtue which receives (in a way of spiritual digesture), Jesus Christ, as the bread of life, doth cleanse and save the soul: which new life puts forth actions of its own nature; which actions do add a perfection of growth and manifestation, but not of essence to that new life of justification, regeneration and reconciliation. All good works of a holy conversation are the improvement of that life, but neither the cause, nor matter of it. The cause of it is the mere grace and favor of God;¹ the matter of this life is the Spirit of Jesus Christ quickening the soul,

¹ Eph. 1: 4—6.

through union with it; and from thence grows action, as the delightful exercise of the life of the new man.

So that my more or less improvement must not bring into question the essence of this life: the least action denotes life as well as the greatest, though the vigor thereof be in a different measure: and if I doubt of life, I cannot produce it by action. Leaves will not put life into the tree; but I am in that case, by soul-resigning and self-renouncing recumbency of heart, to rely upon Christ, to receive life from him. All life lies in the root, and comes thence by naked believing; whereby God, through Christ, vents his own life by mere grace in my soul, that all actions of holiness may be no other than the life of God working in me.

Now, that the soul may both enjoy its communion with God, and also work with vigor the works of righteousness in an active conversation, there must be order and uniformity in every action, suitable to the spirit of communion with God. Without order there can be no peace, but confusion;¹ and without uniformity also, arising from the root of union that is between the action and the spirit of the actor, there can be no peace; for unity breeds peace,² by making things different or distinguishable to agree in one, by some common and uniting likeness or other. And because this uniformity seems naturally to offer itself to consideration in the first place, I would let a few thoughts pass upon it.

In all Christian and morally good actions (forbearing to speak of ungodly actions, which are plainly opposite to the spirit of holiness), no action, though it be in itself materially good, ought to be left to its own swing, but always ought to move in the hand of the Spirit, as it gives direction by, and suitable to, the word. The natural motion of a wheel is to run downwards; yet we read, Ezek. i. 19—21, that the Spirit of the living creature being in the wheels, it guided the wheels from their natural motion, to the pleasure and will of the Spirit that was in the wheels; up or down, hither or thither, as the Spirit moved them. The Spirit and the wheels were made one in motion, by reason of their union. And even so in all good actions, spiritually performed, there is a union betwixt the principle of holiness in the new man, and the outward action that is done; which forms the action into a homogeneous suitableness to that inward principle,

¹ 1 Cor. 14: 23, 40.

² Eph. 4: 3.

and prevents discord betwixt the action and the principle. Thus it was with Job, when he said, "My heart shall not reproach me."¹ And hence comes a peaceable execution of any action, when the principle of holiness does spirit the action, and the action outwardly manifests a justifying concurrence with the principle in and by which it acts, the action and the principle having the same united tendency to the will of God.

And as union and symphony betwixt a gracious efficient principle and a gracious action render it a comfortable service, whatever the work be which is done ; so the order betwixt these two doth order a further supply, to carry on a heavenly conversation here on earth. The goodness of every action (as to comfort in the execution thereof) ariseth from communion with God, for whom, and to whom, that action and service is performed.

Although both be the exercise of the new man, yet each of them acts in its own order ; the heart is first under true warmth within, and then the suitable discoveries do follow. While I was musing (saith David) the fire burned, and then spake I with my tongue."² A good action loseth its inward beauty, when it keeps not its inside order ; it is numbered amongst dead works, and moves but in a ghastly manner, when the Spirit within moves not first ; much like to the irrational actions of a man who walks up and down, and talks by some strength of fancy, when he is in a dead sleep all the while. But when the root of communion with God bears the soul forth unto fruitfulness in any service, that service is comely ; because it springs naturally from a spirit of faith in the new man, and carries along the nature of the new man in whatsoever is done.

These two being observed, would so carry on the course of Christianity, that, in the various affairs of this life, inward peace would not be broken ; there would be readiness at all times to pray, praise, and rejoice. Thus Abraham and Enoch walked with God ; and this is the glorious promise, "They shall walk up and down in the name of the Lord."³

All good actions, being thus rooted and ordered, have the glory of God in their eye, and run forth in the way of duty, carrying with them the encouragement of acceptance with God. And although the actions of such a man may visibly

¹ Job 27: 6.² Psalm 39: 3.³ Zech. 10: 12.

be without success, yet his heart is never wrung with disappointment; because his secret communion with, and subjection to, the will of God (this being the grand purpose of his heart in all he doth) brings him into a holy rest, and maintains an inclination to work still without repining, because he is assured "his work is not in vain in the Lord." So far as the will of God appears, he is quiet with joy, because the pleasure of his work lies in doing God's will, and not his own. Communion with God makes up every breach with an all-sufficiency. Disappointments lock him up within the sanctuary of God, and keep the soul at home, in the pure taste of that communion with God in which it lives,¹ in a readiness to every good work. His good actions, though small as a cup of cold water, or successless, as Isaiah's preaching seemed to him to be,² yet cannot be lost; because communion with God cannot be lost, in the virtue of which those works were done through Jesus Christ.

The Soul sensible of a Cold Fit.

But while I am thus travelling through the consideration of several privileges redounding to a believer, and the way of fruitfulness therein, I feel (methinks) many cold fits to seize upon me. As it was in the day that Abraham was troubled with the fowls which fell upon the carcasses, which God commanded him to divide for the confirmation of his promise, which Abraham drove away till the sun went down; and when a deep sleep and horror of great darkness, fell upon him, then, even then did a fresh assurance of the covenant break forth;³ so, while I am in pursuit of this salvation of God, I find the clouds gather about me; I find not the same sensible entertainment of this salvation in my heart, as sometimes I have found: my soul is filled with guilt and weakness; and therefore I am forced to retire back from pursuing the necessary and practical meditations about the conversation of godliness for a season, lest I leave an enemy at my back that is ready to invade me, which enemy, if it please the Lord to scatter by his Spirit, I shall be more able to attempt the meditations of the works of holiness, (besides having fresh activity to put on the garments of fruitfulness, in the service which I owe to Jesus Christ my Lord), than, methinks, for the present I am.

¹ Psalm 73: 17, 25.

² Isa. 49: 4.

³ Gen. 15: 7—18.

Inward rejoicing and peace have been much impaired, for some days, by weakness, guilt, and distraction that have seized on my heart: there they lie like a mountain of lead. When my thoughts would turn inwards, I hear nothing but outcries of accusation and guilt possessing my heart; I can find no shelter at home, I am forced to fly abroad for a lodging, for company, and food. I am now invited to renew myself a nest above my own heart. My heart is grown hard, dark and weak; it prevails against my former sense of the divine presence; and while it is thus filled with the clamors of death and confusion, methinks I hear the Spirit and the Bridegroom say, 'Come, arise, this is not your rest: launch forth through the ocean of free grace, and let not thy expectation hanker towards thyself; though thy flesh fail, and thy heart fail, yet God is the strength of thy heart, and thy portion forever.' My work is to go forth; and, oh! that I could make a fair escape to him who stands upon the shore to receive me! It is not a few meditations that will do it; it needs a Redeemer's hand to fetch me out, and pull me up.

The Soul flies out of all manner of Selfish Help, to Jesus Christ only.

The delight of the new man is, to be under the government of the Spirit only; and all the issues of the Spirit flow from the heart of Christ only, by which the heart of a believer is made new in him. This newness lies especially in the spirit of a believer, which complies with the Spirit of God in the witness of adoption, even while the contradiction of defiled nature warreth against it. And upon the single consideration of this interest and union betwixt Christ and the soul, yielding itself to the renewing of his Spirit, doth faith go forth, and claim foreign aid, namely, the aid of Jesus Christ, to whom it is united: in conveyance of which aid, Christ first takes the soul more closely into the virtue of that union, that every crumb of his help may truly savor of that relation which is betwixt him and the soul, through the new covenant; and gives out no saving and effectual aid otherwise than as the product and offspring of that union: that so Christ may be all in all, as the treasury and efficient cause of all relief; and that the soul, through spiritual union only, might derive that relief to itself by faith: and as the

foundation of the union lies in free grace, so the application thereof, and the abundant help arising thence, are carried on wholly through the method of the same grace ; for faith can converse with nothing (in order to the life of the new man) but free grace only in the promise.

The very nature of free promises presents to the soul the consideration of all relief to lie originally in God, and that the soul is invited thither only to obtain it, and cannot possibly return empty : for the dispensing of which grace to the sons of men, God manifests himself in the person of the Son, who dwells in human nature, displaying the evidence of this grace in the gospel ; and by his Spirit persuades the soul to believe, accept, and improve it.

And a soul being thus persuaded that his life lies in Christ, upon a free covenant grounded in God's decree, and established on free promises, must not stay to ask leave of his guilty heart, whether he be fit to lay hold on this deliverance, but must wholly consider the freeness of grace, pardon, and righteousness, which is in this new and living way, which God hath made, and not man. If Elijah had poured only on the parched earth that was under his feet, he could have had no argument of moisture to arise from thence ; but having by faith prayed to him who governs the clouds, down came the rain, and the drought vanished.

Guilt of sin is like a hedge, or a wall, that can easily keep the heart in impenitency and unbelief ; but when faith, working by repentance, seizeth on Jesus Christ, it gives wings to the soul of a believer to fly up above all those hinderances of natural guilt and weakness ; and though sin and death remain in his flesh, yet he is got beyond the captivity of the law of sin ; which can no more keep him from the freedom wherewith Christ hath made him free, than a hedge can keep an eagle from soaring up in the air. The sap which feels guilt is unbelief ; now when the sap is withdrawn, the tree dies away by degrees, although it remains in its place for a season : so is it with the old man ; it cumbers the heart awhile ; but Christ at his death gave it such a wound as will never be cured, till it has (by the faith and prayer of every believer) bled itself to death. When guilt seems to live most, and so sends a believer fresh to Christ, then does guilt die apace, and remains only to keep a believer's faith in continual exercise, and to render Christ precious to the soul ; as cold weather makes a fire the more comfortable and pleasant.

So that while my soul holds close to this, that Christ is, (upon his own terms) righteousness, pardon, and life to me, by making me his, and he being mine; my own guilt becomes no longer my own, but his, who bought me with his blood : and, as guilt is removed, so the fear of falling away is removed, and relief against daily infirmities is provided for. If, being an enemy, I was reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, shall I be daily saved by his life. Rom. v. 10.

Faith only a Relief against Daily Infirmities.

But whence ariseth this, that I find it harder to rely on him for power against daily infirmities, than against the power of condemning guilt? Daily infirmities are the lesser enemies; but yet they are present enemies, and seeming smaller in stature than the great bulk of universal human guilt, the soul of a Christian is apt to step forth against them in its own strength and resolution, and so returns many times with shame; whereas the same covenant which takes away the stony heart and state of guilt, is that only which gives a heart of flesh,¹ and cleanseth the soul from all unrighteousness. I cannot therefore mortify one foolish, filthy, or distracted thought, without the application of the whole power of the same Christ who has removed my great and condemning guilt, and cast it into the sea. I am apt foolishly to think, that my great guilt being removed, I may, in some sort, take my ease, which degenerates more and more into spiritual sloth and unthankfulness : but my daily infirmities are like so many pricking briars, which continually afflict me, and let me know that this is not my rest; neither can my own hands put away these briars, but only the consuming fire of Christ's Spirit setting his death and resurrection in battle-array against them. So that I see, if ever I expect a good hour in this world, or to all eternity, it must be only, and altogether in Jesus Christ. O, cursed nature ! O, cursed sloth ! that is ever dividing that which a blessed covenant of grace has joined together, Jesus Christ and my soul. All his drift towards me is, that he might be all in all to me. Oh ! that he would vent himself, and spare not ! He that bids me fear not, only believe, is alone able to make me believe. I often draw near (methinks) to a resignation to him,

¹ Ezek. 36: 26. 1 John 1: 9.

with some universal scope, but I am quickly gravelled again; yet so much delight remains in the very hope of my soul in him, that makes me choose rather to have my eyes towards him, though with a long look, than to say within my heart, "My beloved will never come." Surely he will yet come, and his reward is with him.

Resignation.

This resignation to God is so glorious in the nature, ground, properties, and encouraging privileges of it, that the very glimpse thereof makes my heart light, and even faint for desire to be wholly swallowed up and translated, in spirit, soul, and body, into the pure rest, and crystal life of God;¹ but the nature of it I can no more express, than a man's pencil can draw the portraiture of a man's life, or represent the nature of a taste; although it may draw the figure of a human body, or represent the visible food, in which lies that hidden quality of life and taste. But if words may be used about it, I would thus express it:

The Nature of Resignation.

It is an allaying, delightful, willing, open-hearted dissolving of all my desires, cares, and enjoyments of things present and to come, relating to soul and body, into the heart, and unlimited dispose of God in Christ Jesus, my Lord; with an endless, victorious security of confidence, consolation, and peace of heart and conscience.

The Ground of it.

The ground of which glorious, active, and soul-quickenings rest is Jesus Christ the Mediator, who has received his redeemed to the glory of God.² He is called their peace;³ their rest;⁴ their sufficiency;⁵ their consolation;⁶ their joy;⁷ and all in all.⁸

In all these respects Jesus Christ becomes the ground, and attractive cause of resignation, as he is God and man; bringing the soul, through union with his humanity, to God, with

¹ Rev. 22: 1.

² Rom. 15: 7.

³ Eph. 2: 14.

⁴ Isa. 28: 12. Matt. 11: 28.

⁵ Phil. 4: 13. 2 Cor. 3: 5.

⁶ 2 Cor. 1: 5.

⁷ Matt. 25: 21. Psalm 43: 4.

⁸ Col. 3: 11.

whom he is personally united :¹ into which union every believer is received, through the mystery of his free grace ;² and the application of this union to the soul by faith breeds this blessed resignation : for Christ, being thus qualified in his own person, and thus uniting the soul to himself by his Spirit, begets in the heart, through believing, an answerable counterpart of conformity and quiet in the inward man ; which cannot be capable of loss, (because the unchangeable God is the author and unalterable cause thereof,) nor be obstructed, while faith holds up its exercise therein ; but runs out into an infiniteness of satisfaction in all cases ; because it is got within the help, and boundless interest, of him who is infinite. It enters in, by the door of his manhood, to the partaking of whatever he is heir to ; and is made heir with him, of his conquest, fulness, security, peace, and joy. So that although the flesh may fail, God, who is the portion of a believer, faileth not ; but always unchangeably continueth, in the mystery of this union, to be the foundation and effecting cause of a believer's resignation to him, as into the hands of a faithful Creator.³ Jesus Christ himself is the glorious model of resignation ; for in him God resigned up himself to the nature of man,⁴ and being the eternal Son, he resigned up himself to the will of his Father, to be made a servant : and he who is the lawgiver resigns himself as subject to the law. God over all, blessed forever, resigns himself to the curse of the law ; he resigns up the freedom of his own will to a voluntary covenant ; he undertakes (as it were) the incumbrance of a family, and accounts the cries of many infants about him no disturbance, but a delight ; he resigned up his body to death, and became of no reputation, that out of his dust he might bring many sons to glory ; he resigned up his heart to bear their sins and sorrows ; he hath resigned up whatever he is to be theirs, that they might be his, and be saved, both living and dying, from all wants and fears, through his resignation of himself to stand or fall with them ; and from every part of his resignation he sends forth his Spirit to work resignation also in them, (according to the measure of his own gift in every part of his mystical body) by virtue of that union to which he hath called them with himself. And herein lies the ground and foundation of a believer's holy resignation to God.

¹ 1 Pet. 3: 18.² John 17: 21.³ 1 Pet. 4: 19.⁴ Heb. 2: 14.

Properties of Resignation.

As for the properties of this holy resignation, there is in all resignations a notion of weakness and subjection in the resigned, and of power and dominion in the person to whom resignation is made; there is also an alienation of some proper and private interest and change thereof into the interest of another. And so it is in the soul to God. The soul, being sensible of its own inability, surrenders up itself to the almighty Redeemer, and doth subject itself to the rules of his dominion, as the clay to the hand of the potter; and so the soul in every nerve of it is loosed, and lies down at the will and disposal of the Lord, to do as it seemeth good unto him; and by this means, the soul ceaseth from its own private interest, and submits itself to the merit, mercy, and laws of the Mediator, to be dieted, clothed, and employed by him only, and lives no longer by the life of its own hand.¹

Now (to adopt our Lord's expressions on another occasion²) he stretcheth forth his hands, and another girds him, and leads him whither his fleshly reason would not. He knows never a step of his way, but as the word and Spirit guide him.³ He dares not say his sins are his own, or his righteousness his own, but as Christ, in the gospel, directs and suffers him to think and speak. He can neither accuse nor excuse himself, neither judge nor acquit himself, any otherwise than as he who bought him will allow, and give his consent; because he is now under the dominion and interest of another; and is no longer his own, but married to him who was raised from the dead.⁴

Resignation is in its nature a free act, and is managed in the will, aiming to prevent a greater evil, or obtain a greater good; and therefore carries some content and delight with it, and which is so much the more increased, as the power, authority, and faithfulness of the person resigned to is great and sure. So is it with a believer's resignation to God in Jesus Christ: every glimpse of his infinite power, truth, and mercy redounds to the increase of a believer's refreshment; because he hath a right in the whole (by resignation thereunto) in the person of Jesus Christ; and it eyes his person

¹ Isa. 57: 10. Hos. 14: 3.² John 21: 18.³ Isa. 42: 16.⁴ Rom. 7: 4. Numb. 30: 7, 8.

in all the worth, perfection, and excellency thereof, in such a way of interest and property therein, that it affects the heart, and makes way for the influence of that worth to enter upon the mind and affections; and so renders it active (according to the mind of Christ, and the spirit of the gospel) to obey, believe, and live upon that mind of Christ, represented to the understanding; improving his worth by a sanctified application to every part of the new man, as a holy oil, sinking into every faculty of the soul, and naturally inclining it to every exercise of that new state, to which it is begotten and brought forth by a spiritual resignation.

Privileges of Resignation.

The blessed privileges which arise from hence are innumerable, as God, to whom the resignation is made, is unmeasurable and infinite. The soul of a resigning believer enters into purity, establishment, protection, peace, love, liberty, boldness, satisfaction and joy in the Holy Spirit, and gains an entrance abundantly into "the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

1. Purity. As a stick of wood cast into the fire is changed into the property of that fire: so the casting of the soul into the blood of the immaculate Lamb makes it to abide no longer filthy, but spotless, through the price and preciousness of that blood; the Spirit of which blood removes the private owning and conscience of guilt, and transfers it into the laver of Christ's satisfaction; and the soul comes forth clothed with pardon, righteousness and full acceptance in the sight of God, the righteous Judge; who has constituted a satisfaction to himself by such a method, that his mercy to a sinner might be an act of righteousness, or justice to Jesus Christ the Mediator; and that, by resignation to Christ, a believer might enjoy it in enjoying Christ; whose nature is also shed abroad in the heart by the washing of the new birth, through the word of his grace, to mortify and cleanse the heart, as a seal of implantation into the perfect righteousness, and acceptance of his person who bought it with his blood, Gal. ii. 20. 1 John i. 9.

2. Establishment. Which resignation gives establishment, by engaging him who bears up the pillars of the earth, to bear a poor sinner's weight, and keep it from reeling. Resignation doth incorporate a believer into the very Rock

of ages. It conveyeth a sinner, through the word of free grace and power, clean from his own sin, and gives it an arrival into the very breast of Christ, where it abides without sin or change.¹ Though sin remains in the natural man, and dwells with human flesh, through the whole circuit of the first Adam's state; yet faith replants the soul into the second Adam, who is as wholly pure, as the first Adam is wholly sinful. So that a sinner, in coming to him, resigns himself up from perfect sin to perfect purity. The body of Christ, as it is mystically below, remains for a season under the washing of the word; but as it is mystically married to Christ risen from the dead, and sitting at the right hand of God with him, it is pure as the sun in its brightness, and established forever above all shaking storms of the lower region, whether it be guilt, change, or danger.

3. Protection. Resignation doth naturally claim protection, as appears in the case of the Gibeonites.² Charity and pity would induce a noble mind to help the distressed, though there were no claim of right in the distressed to move such a noble mind. It were cruelty to suffer only a neighbor's ox to lie in the ditch, without some real willingness to help it out: but resignation gives to the resigned a rightful interest in the person to whom the resignation is made: and therefore Christ owns the cherishing and protection of a resigning soul, upon the account of conjugal property and right. No man ever yet hated his own flesh: and therefore not only protecteth, but nourisheth it, "even as Christ the church."³ This rightful interest in him, makes every branch of the wants, griefs, burdens or dangers, that every resigning believer has, to be Christ's concernment as truly and as much (for the nature of them) as the salvation of all the elect, for which he came into the world, and died. His salvation reacheth into every crevice of their need, "He saveth to the uttermost;"⁴ which saving protection stands fitted to a resigned soul, as a curious key to the wards of a lock, and intermits not the least moment from suitable and needful help;⁵ only he manages it in his own method, which a resigned soul owns he is satisfied and delighted in.

4. Peace. Hence comes peace, when the soul of a believer, by resignation (having viewed the compass of plenti-

¹ 1 John 3: 6.

² Josh. 10: 4—6.

³ Eph. 5: 29.

⁴ Heb. 7: 25.

⁵ Isa. 27: 3.

ful redemption, the strength of the rock that is under him, and the helmet of salvation which is over him) saith, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. God hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling;"¹ "I will now lay me down and sleep, for no less than God himself makes me to dwell in safety;"² the peace of resignation is Christ's peace, which none can divide from a believer: it is his garrison, and fortified security.³

5. Love. And from hence flows love to God, the Father, Son, and Spirit. The love of the Father in the Son, and by the Spirit, in all the unspeakable discoveries of it, warms the heart into this resignation unto him.⁴ Christ appearing so amply furnished to conciliate love, and declaring the wealth, power, and glory of his kingdom,⁵ and presenting bracelets of his kindness, (as once Abraham's servant did to Rebekah in behalf of Isaac,⁶) he gains the heart of a believer to forsake former contentments, and resign up its utmost affections to him: the more the soul resigns, the more doth it love; and the more it loves, the more it doth resign to him. The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit, from the heart of Christ, breeds resignation, and that resignation still feeds love; each moving the other with a perpetual motion; and so, from an endless principle of union with Christ, it runs forth to all eternity.

6. Freedom. From whence ariseth also a sense of perfect freedom. The pales of separation and distance are broken down, free access to God in Christ is gained, misapprehensions removed, and open-heartedness interwoven betwixt Christ and the soul. The heir is no longer a servant, but a son.⁷ Esther is brought from the custody of Hegai, to the king's palace.⁸ The boundless deity, in all its purity, power and protection, is the range of a resigning believer. The law is removed; the prince of this world is judged and cast out; the former state of enmity and bondage is over and gone; and now the soul dilates itself with full spread into that "freedom wherewith Christ hath made it free."⁹

7. Boldness. Which freedom brings in boldness along with it. The soul being once resigned up to Christ, is no longer a

¹ Psalm 116: 7, 8.

² Psalm 4: 8.

³ John 14: 27. Phil. 4: 7.

⁴ 1 John 4: 19.

⁵ Psalm 145: 11.

⁶ Gen. 24: 53.

⁷ Gal. 4: 1—7.

⁸ Esth. 2: 8, 16.

⁹ John 8: 36. Gal. 5: 1.

stranger, but of his household; yea, betrothed to his person in righteousness and tender mercy, and is always in his eye. Resignation betwixt Christ and the soul being mutually past, darkness is swallowed up of light, there is no shelter for the beasts of prey. No weapon that is formed against a believer can prosper, who has resigned himself to the Former of all things; he may now dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the wood; a lion-like courage grows in the soul from the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to whom, by resignation, it is united.

8. Satisfaction. What now can hinder satisfaction? Why may not the soul say, I have enough: my inheritance is lawfully gotten; neither have I gotten it with my sword and bow, (as Jacob got a portion from the hand of the Amorite), but I have given myself for it. I have resigned my whole self to Christ, and he has resigned his whole self to me. I own and accept his resignation, and he accepts mine. What further remains, than that I bid farewell to my own poverty and wretchedness, and put on change of raiment? Why may not I dwell amidst the flagons¹ of his satisfying presence? I am filled, and my cup runs over.

9. Joy. And now also, who may hinder a satisfied soul from joy? Will not all the foundation-work and walls of this building bear a superstructure of "Joy in the Holy Spirit?" Is not the upshot of this resignation betwixt Christ and a believer mutual joy? "He joys over his beloved with singing;"² and her spirit rejoiceth in God her Saviour."³ As far as any degree of this resignation tastes these high privileges, so far doth a relish of joy grow in the soul. Resignation brings the soul into the heart of Christ, who hath triumphed gloriously in rescuing his spouse, and now "rejoiceth over her as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride;"⁴ and in the day of the gladness of his heart calls her, "Hephzibah, that is, my delight is in her;"⁵ which joy begets an echo of its own likeness from her again, "My delight is in him."⁶ And thus the crown of joy is placed on the head of spiritual resignation. The soul cannot resign to God without joy in him, nor rejoice in him without resignation. They live in one another; because the seed and nature of all spiritual privileges lies in every privilege;

¹ Cant. 2: 5.² Zeph. 3: 17.³ Luke 1: 47.⁴ Isa. 62: 5.⁵ ver. 4, marginal rendering.⁶ Isa. 58: 14.

and the nature of this privilege being endless, because God is everlasting, the crown of joy can therefore never wither.

10. An entrance into the purchased possession. And the more this resignation to God in Christ gets ground in the soul, the more is "entrance made into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ;" not as it is a work done by us, but wrought in us; in which the heart is made to give way, and is made voluntary therein by the Spirit of grace. Which work is here carried on through much contradiction in the flesh, which strives against it, while the inward man, in every believer, pants after it, and finds no rest, but as the power of this holy resignation to God in all things prevails; till at last it steps over mortality, and leaves every obstruction behind perfectly and forever; and then God is all in all.

Christ enjoying his spouse without any reluctancy or unsuitableness in her, and she enjoying her husband without any veil upon his face; she hears his pure language, and returns pure language again: love has its full vent on both sides: the mutual yearning of bowels will then be satisfied; the voice of, Come, which sounds from Christ above, and the believer below, will terminate itself in one eternal, inseparable meeting. Resignation will then enjoy an uninterrupted delight. How astonishing is the thought of this! When the thought of it is strained through the weakness of my faith, conflicting with so much darkness, and present treachery of heart, and self-unworthiness, the glimpses thereof make me both fear and rejoice at once; and yet I am not able to rejoice perfectly, for fear; nor fear perfectly, for hope. O infinite Redeemer! be over and above all my fear and faintness; act like thyself, almightily and freely, that my heart may shout for joy in the hope of the glory of God, and the day of refreshing, which is promised to appear; "even so come, Lord Jesus."

And now if I might, out of all these considerations, but take home to my own heart a few chips to kindle mine own fire, and be really assigned one inch nearer to Christ, I should think the meditations of this day happily given in. What else doth my soul long for? Some crumbs of this glorious banquet, that my soul may inwardly commend the feast, and say, "The Lord hath done great things for me; Yea, Lord, let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done." I wait, and cry, Amen, Amen.

HOW TO FIND

GOD A SANCTUARY IN TIME OF TROUBLE;

With the Manner of the Author's entering into that Sanctuary, by actually covenanting with GOD.

PERCEIVING a dark cloud and tempestuous storm to be rising, and being called to enter into the chambers of divine protection;¹ and finding it the practice of the Lord's people;² and Jesus Christ having declared himself a shelter from the storm,³ and inviting me to enter into his rest,⁴ I judge it my duty to follow his voice, and betake myself to the horns of the altar: but being hindered by my own guiltiness and unbelief, I am forced, either to wander into desolation of mind, or else to endeavor to cut my way through the incumbrances of my own darkness, by the sword of the Spirit. If the Lord shall be pleased to favor me, and bless this attempt, I shall be safe under his wings. And seeing nothing makes calamities terrible but guilt of sin, I judge it my duty to set my main battery against that strong hold; and to that end I have chosen out for my help that blessed word,

He that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.—Rev. 1: 5.

Which scripture yields excellent relief to that soul that can mix it with faith.

The words, "He that hath loved us," do impart the ground of a sinner's union with Christ; for it is the nature of love to seek and effect union: and we must be one also with him, before ours can be made his, and his made ours.

¹ Isa. 26: 20. ² Psalm 57: 1. 143: 9. ³ Isa. 32: 2. ⁴ Matt. 11: 28.

How Christ's Blood doth wash.

And the words, *our sins* and *his own blood*, being compared together, show, that from union with him flows a transferring of our sins upon him, and, as it were, mixing them, without any personal stain, with his own blood, and so making them his. Our infection, by his own will, entered, as it were, by imputation and burden, into the blood of the unspotted Lamb. He who was personally without sin, suffered himself to be all overladen with the imputation of the loathsome nature and absolute guilt of our sins, and so became sin for us; and yet his blood remained pure, and himself without sin.

The word *washed* alludes to legal washings for purification. He removed our sins from us; making them no longer ours, but his own. As the filth of a garment is washed, whereby the garment becomes clean: so our "iniquities passed away,"¹ by imputation and burden of the curse, into the living body, and life-blood of Jesus Christ. And so the sinner (as the original and principal malefactor) and Christ (as surety) do stand both of them before God the righteous Judge; and both, in some kind, equally liable to sentence: for if Christ had not been able to have freed himself from those sins, they would have sunk him and the sinner too. And herein the metaphor of washing a garment comes short of this mystery; for the filth being gone from the garment into the water, the garment is thereby actually cleansed, though the water be never cleansed from the filth that it borrowed of the garment; because the water and the garment are two separate things: but in this mystical washing, the person washed and the blood washing are joined together, in the union of Christ's mystical person; so that if Christ, who is the surety, miscarry in his work, all they, whose hope of redemption lies only (through mystical union) in their interest in him, must needs perish with him; and if he prevail, they are delivered; for this washing at his agony and death, though in some sense, inchoative, or in its beginning only, was yet accounted perfect; and was so, as it stood in relation to, and connection with, his resurrection, which made him a complete and perfect author of eternal salvation.²

¹ Zech. 3: 4.² Heb. 5: 9.

How a pure Christ was made Sin for us.

But how Christ could bear our sins, and be made sin for us, and yet be personally pure, this is a great wonder ; and he must be without sin all the while, else he could not have taken away our sins. One contrary expels another : but he doth it not at a distance, as the light of the sun drives away darkness before it : but he enters sinlessly into the state of our sin, that we might enter into the state of his righteousness. He cures, not as a physician, who cures by medicines, but was himself touched and sufferingly affected with our infirmities ; he was made sin for us. He not only espoused the punishment of our sins to himself, but was married also to our guilt, and to all the dreadful workings of it, so far as that it made him sick and sorrowful, even to the very death. He had the guilt of our delight in sin, without any delight in it. He made himself guilty of all our sins, but had no guilt of his own, nor any defilement to his nature by ours. If one man be guilty of another's sin, he is defiled himself, without lessening the defilement of the other man ; because the guilt is not translated from the one to the other, but extendeth and spreadeth its poisonous nature from the one to the other ; and so fills, as it were, both vessels, without any removal of the guilt ; but Christ's nature, being capable of no personal infection, gives liberty and scope to the guilt of a sinner to vent itself wholly into the bottomless and endless satisfaction, merit, and righteousness of Christ the Mediator, till the last drop of it be gone, and the fountain dried up, through union with his spotless nature. Our sins touched him, as to an experimental sense of the filth and burden of them. He bare our sins in the body of his flesh : but that flesh, being personally united to the Godhead, remained pure, and incapable of any corruption, through the purity of that personal union.

But how inexpressibly far he took in the sense and burden of all sin, and made it his own in the utmost measure, and how infinitely pure he still remained ; the knowledge of this the angels desire to look into, and must be reserved, till the saints come to know him even as they are known.

Sin dwells in our nature habitually and actually, but lay upon him by imputation ; and so passively his nature bare our sin, but could not act it.

But how should a sinner come to enjoy redemption from his sins by a Mediator thus wonderfully qualified, and so admirably sustaining a sinner's guilt?

This is worth the inquiry; but I must not without preparation rush into this mystery. It is holy ground; I must be unshod, that I may enter in, and stand upon it.¹ "No man cometh to the Son, but whom the Father draweth."² I may, indeed, get the notion of something about it; but can come to no heart-enjoyment, without the unction of the Spirit of Christ to possess, and so to lead me in within the shadow of this almighty Redeemer. It is wearisome and barren work to be gaping towards this mystery by a mere speculative search; and therefore I would fain make it my design to give away my whole self, in every step of this inquiry, to Jesus Christ, that I may be taught this mysterious privilege, as the truth is in him, whom thus to know is eternal life. And therefore, with a holy fear and tenderness, I desire to wade, according to the scriptures, into this depth, by "the Spirit which searcheth the deep things of God."³

How to enjoy Christ actually.

As a foundation for further search, I find, that Christ himself, and a conscience purged from guilt by means of his death are things enjoyable;⁴ and so offered and held forth in the gospel. My work in the next place is, to inquire how I may actually enjoy an interest in so high a privilege.

I am, in the first place, (under a sense of my own necessity) to lie down before God, and suffer Jesus Christ, as crucified and risen again, to enter with all his train into my heart, and take possession there: and I then am to suffer his Spirit (shutting my eyes and stopping my ears against carnal reasonings) to lead me into a willing resignation to this crucified and risen Christ, my Redeemer; which is a spiritual marriage to his person. A notional landscape of this state will not serve my turn. O Thou, "in whom all the promises are yea and amen," renew a right spirit within me, and let my very soul be moulded into the truth by every meditation.

My guilt has increased upon me this day; I have lost my thirst after God, and do find my strength to waste. My

¹ Ex. 3: 5.

² John 6: 44.

³ 1 Cor. 2: 10.

⁴ Heb. 9: 14.

drift is not pure; and I am carried away into a withered frame, and my heart cannot return. The sounding of thy bowels, the multitude of thy tender mercies, are able to bring me back, and enlighten me with the light of life. An impure eye cannot behold thee, nor a surfeited mind eat of this manna. My disease is great, but there is no healing medicine to be had but in thee, O my Redeemer.

Wouldst thou in earnest, O my soul, be cured, and effectually enjoy the redemption of Christ, then retire to him alone, and let thine eye be singly fixed there. Render up thy guilt to him who has bought it out of thy hands. Withdraw thy shoulder from the burden, and, with a loathing of thyself and thy sin, leave it upon Jesus Christ. His Father and thine laid thy guilt upon him already on the cross; and when thou dost by faith lay thy guilt upon him also; thou dost not crucify the Son of God afresh; but dost only set to thy seal, that he is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He bought thy sins to destroy them: he shed his blood, that their guilt might be condemned; and waits upon thee, to bring them forth to him for execution. It is not a pain, but a pleasure to him, that a sinner delivers up his sins to him; because the vengeance he sustained for sins has fixed a day of vengeance in his heart against the daily guilt of his redeemed;¹ and revenge is sweet. Whatever briars and thorns are set before him in battle, he will go through them, and burn them together.² He sustained the curse, satisfied justice, and returned to his Father with the tokens of his conquest; and now he attends, in the gospel, upon the elect, to cause them to shake themselves from the dust, and bring forth their dead (the slain of the Lord) to the burial. A sinner then lays his sins upon Christ, when he believes that God the Father laid them upon him. God the Father imposed the burden, and a sinner by faith concurs, and melting under the sight of divine justice, cries out: "Even so, O Father! because it pleased thee to bruise him; even so, O dear Redeemer! because thou lovedst not thy life to the death, that thou mightest redeem me by thy own blood; I leave my sins upon the sacrifice of thy flesh, and would crave leave to look upon him whom the Father made an offering for my sins, and whom I have pierced; and in

¹ Isa. 63: 4—6.

² Isa. 27: 4.

the view of this costly redemption, would mourn over him, as a man mourneth for his only child." ¹

But yet, that I may improve this mysterious happiness to the more full advantage, I would beg help from the Lord, to assist me with a true view of the real existence of those things which relate to Jesus Christ, and God's covenant concerning me, and with me in him; and what is the mysterious method and power of the actual exercising of faith thereupon.

The Gospel is a Real Thing.

The real existence of all gospel-privileges is witnessed by the scriptures, which do positively attest, that those things are so and so, as is expressed; but such is the base treachery of my heart, that the custom of reading and hearing those things makes them seem common, and debaseth their majestic worth; and so, beholding them through a literal and common estimate, my eye loses at once their true color and certainty, which enfeebles my apprehensions, as to the lively belief of their real existence.

And in order to the curing of this disease, I am waiting on the God of light and truth, to breathe upon my heart such a quickened frame of meditation, as may humbly and effectually steer my soul to the mark which I aim at. Unmortified invention would be busy to hammer out some answer to my query; but, alas! it is a physician of no value: for who can reason a blind man into the use of his sight? He only, who brings life and immortality to light, is able to make the things that appear not, to be seen.

Hast thou not heard, O my soul, that thy true and only welfare lies in things which neither the eye of the body, nor the natural eye of the mind, can attain to? How self-denying then shouldst thou attempt this search! And therefore, lest thou catch a shadow instead of the substance, turn thyself once more by prayer, to Him who opens the eyes of the blind; who hath promised he will not give thee a stone, when thou askest bread for thy necessity: and then consider,

1. To what end dost thou profess that thou believest the scriptures to be the word of God, unless also thou settest to

¹ Isa. 53: 10. Zech. 12: 10.

thy seal, that it is the very will and mind of God, expressed in those words of truth? Consider also,

2. That the most serious discourse of the people of God about spiritual things (although their hearts are not under an equal degree of spiritual warmth) do attest that those things are really true. The more spiritually anything is preached or spoken, it yields the more relishable taste to their inward man; and though they are of different nations, yet they accord in the same main principles of the new creature, and the same substantial inward exercise of heart. Observe, also,

3. With what radical uniformity the opposers of grace do resist the convictions of his Spirit. And besides,

4. Doth not thy truest rest lie in thy nearest approaches to God in Christ, as thy centre, towards which thou art restlessly rolling, as the true and real bottom of all thy hope and comfort?

But wouldst thou indeed know that the matters contained in the word of Christ are real things? Then never read or hear for mere knowledge sake. Look for some beams of Christ's glory and power in every verse. Account nothing knowledge, but as it is seasoned with some revelation of the glorious presence of Christ, and his quickening Spirit. Use no conference about spiritual truths, for conference sake; but still mind the promoting of something for real edification. Use not duties for custom and mere service sake, but for approach and nearer communion with God.

Make no person thy pattern, more or less, than as some warmth of the presence of Christ appears in his words, walk, and conversation.

Let thy recreation be prayer; suffer not guilt to rankle; wash often in the blood of Christ; do not slightly grieve the Spirit, but pray for the fulfilling of the promise, that the Spirit shall teach you all things.¹

Let nothing bar up your way from craving pardon of sin, and hope of relief. And if you thus trade in spiritual things, as real, they will appear more and more to be real, according to the promise, John vii. 17. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or not."

But, alas! while I would thus muse my heart into some

¹ John 14: 26.

spiritual freedom and activity, I am again dismally invaded; my filthy and vile heart rebels; the prince of darkness hath violently broken in upon me; my conscience is defiled, and my peace wounded; my prayers are heartless; I have turned myself round into a giddiness; I have lost my station, and am bleating up and down like a lamb in a large place; I got a glimpse of relief, but cannot fix my eye upon it. But what gain I by solitary complaint? I have sinned in the sight of God, angels, and men, in the sight of my Redeemer, in the sight of my own conscience; and, oh that I could pour out my soul as water before the Lord! It would be a rich mercy to me to be admitted to cast myself at the feet of my Judge, and get so near as Mary did, to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of perpetual resignation to himself, and to his disposal of me, to purge me in what method soever, so I may be clean, and the seven abominations in my heart cast out.¹ I would fain say, in faith, I will yet look to thy holy temple,² blessed be the name of him who is strong, merciful, gracious, and abundant in pardon. Blessed be that God, that Redeemer, the Lord, and yet (unworthy, sinful wretch as I am) my righteousness.

O that God would yet spirit me to inquire into, and taste, the bread which came down from heaven! I am searching after the real existence of Christ, and the benefit which flows from union with him. And I perceive that my peculiar happiness lies not in this, that these things have real existence in themselves, but that I know them to exist, and myself to exist in them, and they in me.

The things themselves are spiritual; I cannot know them naturally, but by the Spirit of faith; for flesh cannot see Spirit; in the mount will the Lord be seen. As far as God shines upon my heart and the ordinances, so far I behold a real worth and glorious power in them. In his light only I see light.³ As far as grace gets life in my soul, so far I see the real excellency of it. As the life of God opens itself to my heart, so far I live, and know the ravishing comfort of spiritual life; for with him is the fountain of life. When he withdraws his breath, I do (as it were) return to the dust: for in him I live and move. I know no worth in any Christian, but as I partake with him in the same spirit and

¹ Prov. 26: 25.

² Jonah 2: 4.

³ Psalm 36: 9.

life. Divine commands, reproofs and comforts, do so far affect my heart powerfully, as my soul doth live in him who speaketh them. The demonstration of spiritual things doth so far appear convincing, as my heart is really transformed by them into the image of Jesus Christ, my Lord, and my Head. Though I have a renewed principle of light and sight, yet I cannot exercise the sense of spiritual sight, till the Sun of righteousness sends forth a beam to me, by which I may behold him in the reflection of his own light. And this binds over my soul to the necessity of a mortified, believing resignation to the Author of all light, sight, and strength, who is an unchangeable rock, and his work is perfect. Although I am full of changes, yet his covenant keeps me from utter falling. My strength and sight are ever decaying, but he renews his loving-kindness every morning. O, let the day hasten, in which I may know as I am known, and the shadows of darkness and infirmity flee away !

I might come to a more real view of Jesus Christ, and appropriate him and his benefits nearer to my heart, if I had practically learnt the exercise of faith. God has allowed a venturing boldness to believing, that it may step forth and stand in the breach when all seems to be lost. When Lot is taken, and Ziklag burnt, and all carried away captive, then can faith turn the day, and recover the spoil.¹

Faith only brings the Heart to Christ.

Faith is a distinct grace, wrought freely by the Holy Spirit, quickening the heart to assent to, and rest upon the word of God, upon the account of the truth of God who spoke it. It is distinct, as seeing and hearing are distinct from the other senses. It is wrought freely by the Spirit, and so no acquired notion ; it quickens through conveying life from Christ to the heart by divine appointment. It assents to, and rests upon, the word, against the contradiction of flesh and blood. It eyes the truth of God, as the fountain of its satisfaction and success. And so it first unites the heart to Christ, and gives actual interest and property in him, and in the covenant which God made with him before the world was ; and consequently in all the blessings contained in the covenant.²

As the gospel freely offers Christ, pardon, and life, so faith

¹ Gen. 14: 11, 16. 1 Sam. 30: 1, 19. ² 2 Tim. 1: 9. Eph. 1: 3, 4.

takes them freely ; not measuring the ground of accepting them from below, but from above. It sees the word to be the breathing of God in Jesus Christ, in which all his attributes are working ; and beholds it (as it were) the audible voice of God, and the very mind of Christ. It cannot rest satisfied in the weakness of the letter, but passeth through the letter immediately to the person of Jesus Christ, and converseth with God in him. The whole scriptures are to the eye of faith, in the quality of a pair of spectacles, through which faith gets the sight of, and closeth with, the promise. It magnifies the scriptures, ordinances, and sabbaths, as they are the portal through which to enter into communion and converse with God himself. It believes the scriptures, that make report of the will and pleasure of God, and so passeth through them, to the will, mind, and name of God himself. Faith visits the word as a faithful guide in its journey, and useth it no farther than as a means tending to bring the soul and God together. The word reports that Christ is there, his life, his strength, his grace, is there, and requires the soul to enter in and take the whole ; faith enters in, finds, and receives it. Faith having found its object, and espying the way how to come at it, is quickened by the Spirit, in pure obedience to God's command, to attempt some holy adventures upon the word ; and passeth by all considerations of flesh and blood, as deaf and blind to all things but what the word speaketh. It is resolved to take (if I may so speak) a senseless journey to Christ, even upon the sea ; for it is contented to feel no ground but the promise. It stays not to inquire, whether it had strength enough to walk or not ; but looks on the word of truth, and considers its need, and so ventures ; and by venturing engageth all the attributes of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, for its relief. Its language is, " If I perish, I perish : " and the faithful and true Witness hath said, " Fear not, only believe."

Faith possesses the Understanding, Judgment, and Will, and puts them to exercise.

Faith, so far as it works, persuades the heart of the truth, power, wisdom, and goodness of God that speaketh, and of the sure performance of the thing spoken ; and is singly of itself, through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, a principle of appropriating to the heart the truths spoken from

the mouth of an infinitely true, holy, and wise God in his word; and so fixeth a blessed satisfaction in the heart, through the real existence of the things spoken, and apprehended by the renewed understanding, so far at least as they are, by an actual exercise of faith, apprehended. "Blessed is she who believed, for there shall be a performance of the things told her from the Lord." Luke i. 45.

The Understanding exercised.

The understanding being renewed, surveys the covenant, as it was made with Christ before all time;¹ and considers what method God has used, to manifest it in the world. He created the habitable world, and made man at first righteous, and then permitted him to fall into the breach of the first covenant, namely, of works; whereby he gave entrance and footing to the second covenant, namely, of grace;² and carried it along in a holy line, through the corrupt race of mankind before the flood. He then sweeps away the ungodly world, and preserves the covenant-line in Noah; and from him, carries it on to Abraham, and keeps it on in its course, amidst much profaneness and idolatry that was in the world. He then renews it more distinctly with Abraham, and gives it a more visible being than ever before that time; and, by reason thereof, calls Abraham the father of the faithful. He confirms it also to Isaac and Jacob, who are oftentimes mentioned in the scriptures, as the three grand witnesses of this covenant-favor. From thence it descends to the twelve tribes, representing the elect visible church. After which, it is brought forth in a typical representation of Christ, and of his managing all things needful to make that covenant applicable; which is carried on under the shadows of the ceremonial law. The prophets succeed, asserting this covenant of grace, and expounding it. At last comes Christ in the flesh, and seals it with his blood; and the apostles are sent forth, to discover and preach this eternal purpose of grace to the wide world, for calling in the elect. So that the covenant of grace, which was made of God in Christ before the creation of the world, appears to be the main scope of the scriptures; and issues forth its virtue through all the promises, fatherly commands, reproofs, consolations, and de-

¹ Tit. 1: 2.

² Gen. 3: 15.

liverances which are recorded in scripture ; as the various streams, operations, experiences, and effects of the covenant of grace, in and towards the heirs of life. It bare the name of the old covenant, during the time the passover was in use ; and after the Lord's Supper was instituted, it was called the new covenant ; both old and new are one covenant of grace, differing from the covenant of works as far as grace and works do differ.

The Exercised Judgment.

The understanding having perused the scriptures ; and so taken its view, and deliberated the matter, digesting it by meditation and prayer ; the judgment resolves to make covenant-refuge its sanctuary ; and thereupon, forbids the heart to admit the contradictions of flesh and blood, and the reasonings of carnal wisdom and observation : it resolves to determine nothing according to the flesh ; endeavors to shut up all passages, by which unbelief, carnal mis-construction and fear were used to enter ; and labors to keep open every port that may admit the naked recourse, the single access of the Spirit in the word, and opens the windows of the soul, to take in the testimony and evidence of a faithful and merciful God only.

And when this mighty discovery and conquest is made, the foundations of bondage, terror, and tyranny, which before tormented the conscience, and enslaved the heart, do now begin to totter.

The Will Assents.

The understanding and judgment, having gone thus, are under the conduct of the Spirit, do attempt effectually to persuade the will to accept a new Lord, namely, the Messenger and Prince of the covenant ; him "in whom all the promises are yea and amen." Sanctified conviction begins to sway the will, as Nathanael was moved by Philip to come and see him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write ; and assures the conscience that God is ever mindful of his covenant, has sealed it with the blood of his own Son, and has sworn that it shall stand sure as the ordinances of heaven, and that not a tittle of it shall ever fail ; to which the will assents.

But, alas ! how doth my pen gash (as it were) my own.

soul, in writing what I cannot heartily, and at full liberty, put in practice! O that my understanding and judgment had thus far (in a powerful gale of the Spirit) led my soul forth to the gates of freedom, and thus far brought me within the bond of the covenant! How soon would the same mighty power conquer and bring over my will to a holy security and rest in believing!

My Soul in a Tempest.

I am (methinks) like Jonah, in the bottom of the sea; the bars of an earthly and dark mind are stopping my way, and I seem to myself as lifeless, as if I had no interest in the fountain of saving health: the weeds are wrapped about my head. I am in the deep, but cannot cry unto the Lord, as Jonah did.¹

And what the Lord is teaching me by this unexpected disappointment, I cannot yet tell; I have, notwithstanding, hope in him, that I shall yet be rescued from this captivity, and see his face again.

I had been searching after all my sins, through the several ages of my life, and endeavoring to view the depravity of my soul in all the sinful circumstances of every sin; but could not wind myself out. My design was to get thereby to a more sincere closure with Christ; but, ere I was aware, I had challenged forth more enemies than I could well suppress. I thought, by aggravating my sins, to have got more hunger after Jesus Christ, but, (like over-much cold water) it damped my stomach, and I found sickness seizing upon me rather than hunger; a heartless stupidity instead of believing. I concluded I was (in some kind or other) out of my way; or else had not prepared my stomach to keep out the infection that exhaled from that body of death which is within me, as I should have done, while I was moving the limbs thereof. The thing I aimed at was quickening: then I remembered that word, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"² which seemed to suggest this seasonable advice, Come not amongst the graves without his company who died for sins, and is risen from the dead. I could not be satisfied about the sincerity of my repentance, and there I stuck; till, at length, I remembered that Christ rose again, as well to give repentance as remission of sins.³ So that I

Jonah 2: 4—6.

² Luke 24: 5.

³ Acts 5: 31. 11: 18.

can bring no repentance to him, but I must first get it from him: he is also exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour" in giving this repentance: a Saviour to take away all the defects of my repentance; a Prince to overcome all the difficulties, and to create in me a sound mind against the infirmities of my repentance, and my halting therein. Take, then, O mighty "Prince and Saviour," this work into thine own hands, and "create a right spirit within me."

My Soul returning to its Strong Hold.

So that now my gadding spirit is brought back again, to see that Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of whatever doth concern the new creature. And yet, although he be so, how hard is it to venture my soul and body, my whole hope and care into his hands, by faith in his word! I had need know such a one very well with whom I am to venture myself through a warfaring life here, and shortly through death and judgment too, and so into the ocean of eternity. O, dear Jesus, who art my Lord and my God, who canst renew my heart, (and none else can do it), breathe upon me, and say, "Receive the Holy Ghost." Cast thy mantle upon me, and let the unction of thy Spirit be so shed abroad throughout my whole soul, that my heart may be entirely thine, thine only, that thyself only may be the covering of my eyes, instead of all other objects.¹

The Soul first Improves Baptism.

And now what should hinder, but that, at length, I should solemnly, in the presence of God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, and in the presence of all the elect angels, pursue the ends of that covenant which was sealed, by Christ's appointment, to me in baptism; through whose hands soever that ordinance was appointed or permitted to pass upon me. Was not that still a divine prophecy which even a Balaam spake, Numb. xxiv. 17. "There shall come a star out of Jacob," etc.? O, did it alter its nature or lose its value by passing through his mouth? And can the ordinance of Christ be made void, through whose hands soever it came, and in what unworthy robe soever it was dressed? Did the sacred ark lose its virtue by being in the Philistine's custody? Did he

¹ Gen. 20: 16.

forsake it who dwelt between the cherubims? Was the mercy-seat deserted, and become like common metal? Why then should this ordinance be lost to me, in the substance of it, though (it may be) some human scurf was laid upon its surface? And have I not reason to hope (through covenant-grace) that the faith and prayers of my dear parents, then and since, are more in force for a blessing upon it to me, than the defects of others, in the manner of administration, can have to hinder it? especially as I am myself now desirous humbly to take hold of the covenant, and with my own consent to say, "I agree to the condescension of thy grace and love, my dear Lord; I take hold on thy free love, and into thy name, O most holy God, (Father, Son, and Spirit) I give myself up through him who confirmed the covenant, and came by water and blood to make it effectual. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." I reach out my hand through thy grace, let thy grace and power pull me over to thyself, that in the ark of thy unchangeable covenant I may be carried above myself, and above a miserably drowned world. Be not absent, O Thou, who in thy mercy didst make and impose this seal of the covenant, as the badge of one of thy family, for me to wear; who also speakest words of truth and life, when thou sayest, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" fulfil thy good word unto me thy servant, in which I desire to hope, that thou mayest be mine, and I may be thine wholly forever; that I may serve thee, and glory in thee, with all thy people, who are thine own inheritance."

Struggles with Unbelief.

Do not hang back, O my poor heart, whose weakness and inconstancy have so often bruised my inward man. O anxious unbelief, thou tellest me, it is a bargain soon made; but how shall it be performed? Thou urgest me with difficulties that will arise from the world, from myself, from the trials that I may undergo in my body, my soul, my estate; unwonted trials. Thou tellest me of the great fits of darkness, and shameful declinings I have had, after much refreshment, and strong resolutions to the contrary. Thou tellest me, that my falls will now cost me dearer than ever they did, and the Holy Spirit will be sooner vexed and grieved than before. Thou tellest me, I shall soon be weary of my yoke, and then

my sins will be of a deeper and more heart-hardening dye than ever. But remember, O soul-destroying unbelief, I roll myself upon the Rock of ages, I deliver myself up to the covenant of grace; not to bring strength to it, but to fetch strength from it, and from that word, which saith, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace:"¹ and because I am weak, therefore I go to everlasting strength. The more I make infinite power my lord and master, the more is that divine power engaged to hold me up.² Let my own power languish into nothing, so long as I can claim (on the account of free grace) undoubted right to the arm of God. My own strength never did me good, but deceived me. Dost thou not know, O mis-giving heart, that I am shortly to leave the whole weight of my soul (in launching from mortality) upon the same word of promise which doth now offer strength to carry me through the difficulties of my present warfare; and what do I more than step forth to behold the Lord sealing his covenant and promise, that he will be my God, and will guide me by his grace, and afterwards bring me to glory?" To which covenant, in faith, though "with fear and trembling," I desire to give my consent; which (I trust) in some measure of sincerity, I have done.

Neither do thou, O Satan, vaunt, and say to me, as Eliab said to David, "I know the pride of thy heart."³ I shall yet bring thee down." Know, O thou false accuser, I go to him, who is both able to hold me up, and make me humble too, that I may be more and more abased, and die away from the workings and lustings of flesh and blood, into the power, grace, wisdom and truth of God; to whose covenant, for that end, by his own appointment, I declare my consent; and do desire, with a broken and bleeding heart, to bless him, that ever he allowed me to come so near to him in this manner. Though I fall, I shall not fall utterly, I shall be raised up again, because my Redeemer is risen; and he is strong who pleads my cause.

What is the volume of the Scriptures, but a divine economy, containing the laws of relation betwixt a God of all grace and his chosen; institutions and commands of grace, threatenings and reproofs of grace, promises and betrothings of grace, and mere grace? Has not the same God, who

¹ Rom. 6: 14.² Rom. 14: 4.³ 1 Sam. 17: 28.

said, "I will betroth thee to me forever in righteousness and judgment, in loving-kindness and mercies, and in faithfulness," said also to me, "Thou shalt know the Lord?"¹ Has he not said to me, "Thy Maker (Father, Son, and Spirit) is thy Husband,"² even while I am grieved in spirit, and tossed about with the tempest of my own confusions? And has he not said, that I shall say, "The Lord is my God?"³ And he will say, "Thou art one of my people,"⁴ and will not be ashamed to be called my God?⁵ Yea, hath he not declared that I shall say, I am the Lord's; and that I shall bear his name and surname with his Jacob and his Israel; and that I shall even subscribe it with my hand,⁶ never to be reversed? O Fountain of life and living waters, reveal thyself, that I may not go about to marry flesh and spirit together; but that I may be spirited as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, and so enter into this glorious, spiritual, flesh-mortifying, and mystical wedlock. Let it not be merely speculative, but real; and influenced with light, life, and power, from thy heart to mine.

Oh how doth this unwilling heart of mine hold back! What canst thou close with, besides God in Christ, but it will perish; and while it is in thy hand, will be a broken reed, that will make thee fall in leaning upon it? Is not the covenant of grace somewhat which God himself hath devised for his own glory, and thy establishment? Has he required thee to bind thyself to fear and love him; and hath not he engaged to circumcise thy heart, that thou mayest love and fear him? Deut. xxx. 6; Jer. xxxii. 40; Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

O that I could put faith to this word, till the warmth thereof grew up into a flame, which many waters might never quench! And O let my faithful God, who has expressly promised by covenant, to give me one heart and one way, (with the rest of them who are confederates of grace,) that I may fear him forever for my good, remember it, and fulfil it (as he hath said) with all his heart, and all his soul.⁷ O pardon my unbelief, that I do stand so far aloof from putting it to my soul, that God, who cannot lie, will accomplish his word to a tittle.

¹ Hos. 2: 19, 20.² Isa. 54: 5.³ Zech. 13: 9.⁴ Hos. 2: 28.⁵ Heb. 11: 16.⁶ Isa. 44: 5.⁷ Jer. 32: 39-41

The Soul longs for Clear Work.

My soul longs to be at some more distinct and express closure with such a God, and would fain reckon beforehand what it will cost me. When I consider that word, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, and that you are not your own? for you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."¹ I even faint under the majesty of such a covenant of unutterable grace, which calls me up to such dignity and duty at once. Body and spirit, which are God's, what a word is this! You are not your own. How far does this reach! The whole concernment of my soul and body, which are my own, are to be given up to God by faith and new obedience, that they may be his, and at my own disposal no longer. Oh, a thousand worlds for a surrender suitable to this estate and high calling of God in Jesus Christ! Oh, let the Creator of Israel, my King, fashion the value of this pearl in every affection of my soul, that I may (in his own meaning) sell all to purchase it! Christ Jesus was in earnest when he gave his body to the cross, and his very soul an offering for my sake: O that I could be in a like seriousness, in giving away my body and soul to him again! Strengthen, O Lord, my weak hands, and confirm my feeble knees.

The Soul is invited by Christ.

Methinks I hear the voice of my beloved Jesus calling out, "Fear not, O anxious soul, behold it is I, be not afraid; I, who am thy Redeemer, am strong; I am mighty to save: and therefore, hearken, O daughter, and consider; incline thine ear; forget also thy father's house, and thine own people: let me be the object of all thy affections, rest in my pleasure only and always; so will I, thy King and Husband, greatly desire thy beauty, and be always trimming thee for my own society, for I am thy Lord; and thou must worship, and fully rest in, and be devoted to me alone, and to no other."

¹ 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.

And doth Consent and Engage.

I consent, dear Christ : and here I offer my body and soul to the agreement ; I give them up, dear and gracious Redeemer, I give them up unto thee forever. In obedience to thy commands, and relying upon thy strength, I write it with my own hand, that I will be thine, and for thee, and not for any other ; my Beloved is mine, and I am his. Though I am very black, and very polluted, through my natural pollution and daily infirmity ; yet, through the savor of thy ointments, O precious, ever-living, ever-interceding Christ, let me now be a sweet savor in thy nostrils, and pleasant in thy sight, and in the sight of thy and my Father ; and let me be breathed upon, day and night, by the Spirit of the Father and the Son, that I may now go about thy work with joy, and be led forth by thee with peace, and renewed testimonies of thy help and presence. Let the mountains and hills break forth before me into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands for joy. Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, because the good-will of God has stooped to such a worm as I. Instead of the thorn, now let there be a fir-tree ; instead of the brier, a myrtle-tree ; let righteousness and conformity to thy will prosper in my soul, as an everlasting sign of this covenant, that it shall never be cut off, nor broken.

What am I, O Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast brought me hitherto ? Stablish thy covenant to thy servant, as the sure mercies of David, forever. And seeing I do now rest in this blessed covenant, (leaning upon thee, my dearly beloved) let me never nourish halting inquiries from the time of these sacred vows to the most high God. Let me never devour and destroy this sacred bond ; and so turn this present and holy design, and inviolable tie, into a snare. Take this burden upon thy shoulders, O Rock of ages ; and let this covenant and my personal infirmity also be perpetually before thy eyes, to make good thy covenant upon all occasions ; and let thine everlasting arms be always under me, to keep my feet from falling.

To this covenant with my God, and to these my supplications, confessions, and vows, in the name of Him who hath called me into this liberty, through the blood of the Mediator and my dear Redeemer, which I declare to be my act and

deed, through his grace, never to be reversed, and that it may stand as a mount and sure witness all the days of my life, that I have at this time, and this evening, solemnly, and with a sincere aim and full purpose of heart, unfeigned consent, and joyful satisfaction, laid hold on the covenant of grace as my own interest, relying on my Mediator's help and strength to see it all performed, both on behalf of my God and me; and in whose hand I leave it, who knows the meaning of his own Spirit. To this covenant I say, (namely, the whole substance thereof, and all the expostulations and desires concerning the same) with some faith in, fear of, love to, and hope towards Him, who alone worketh in me, to will and to do according to his good pleasure: according to that measure which I have received, with a trembling joy, I consent, and do cast myself into his arms, and subscribe it with my own hand, never to be revoked.

HENRY DORNEY.

The Soul Explains its Engagement.

And seeing this is the accepted time in which God hath heard me, and a day of salvation in which he hath succored me, I would yet further put on the bond of this glorious freedom as my robe forever; and declare, that as my God has often repeated the substance of his gracious covenant, sometimes in reference to the time to come;¹ sometimes in reference to the time present;² sometimes speaking of his people;³ and sometimes speaking to his people;⁴ in all which he appears as one setting forth his unlimited purpose of good things, with variety of illustration, and ground of assurance to all his confederate people, leading them forth to a plentiful way of rightful and abundant application thereof to themselves, and for their use in all cases forever; I do also declare, that my scope and sense in this my covenanting with God is, that, through his strength, I will disown all rebellings and repinings against his threatenings, reproofs, and chastisements; and that I will disown the stifling of any of my convictions, because they are all of them dispensations of his grace, and means whereby to partake more and more of his holiness.⁵ My scope and sense also further is, that my heart

¹ Ezek. 11: 20. 36: 38.

² Isa. 43: 3, 5. Ezek. 34: 31.

³ Jer. 24: 7.

⁴ Jer. 30: 22.

⁵ Heb. 12: 5—10.

shall lie open to all the commands of my God, and that I will own them as my heritage forever, taking them to be my joy, and delight, and love, whatever they require;¹ and that because they are his good pleasure, and because I account his rebukes of all sorts, and commands of all sorts, to be the representations and beams of his righteousness and holiness;² and the very rays also of the covenant of his grace.³

Here is more work for thee, O my blessed Surety. It is thy grace alone that can uphold me in all parts of my duty, and perfect that which concerneth me. I ground my promise upon thine.⁴ I had not dared to have promised these things, if thy word had not first assured me, that thou wilt do all thy works in me and for me.⁵ Put on strength then, O arm of the Lord; let not thy name be polluted, and my boasting in thee turn to thy reproach. Remember, thou art all my strength and life. For this end I would multiply all the commands of God in my eye, that under my impossibility of performance (through that contradiction and infirmity that is in my flesh) I might be swayed and carried by the Spirit of faith into the perfection of strength, and be able to do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me, and answereth for me. Of all the thousands of God's commands he never required me to do one with my own arm, as the obedience in which he delights; but that I should act in strength every moment received from Christ, and so work my works in God⁶ all the days of my life. Reveal to thy covenant-servant, O Lord, that strength which thou allowest me, that I may know where it lies, and how to derive it to myself for thy work and service, according to the scope of this covenant, which, at thy gracious call, I offer up myself unto. How dost thou necessitate me to thy yoke, and allure me by a gracious violence to delight in having my hands and heart tied with the heart-strings of thy love to thyself, in this golden covenant, inextricably, and forever! Take me, O dearly beloved of my soul, nearer and nearer to thyself, till all the shadows be gone; that then I may behold thy face, and be satisfied with thy image.

Oh, how soon am I now diverted from a pure and diligent watchfulness! how many precious minutes slide away from

¹ Psalm 119: 6, 97, 111.

² Rev. 3. 19. Psalm 119: 75.

³ Isa. 26: 12. Psalm 57: 2. 1 Thess. 5: 24

⁴ Psalm 119: 75. Jer. 12: 1.

⁵ Isa. 41: 10. Joel 3: 16.

⁶ Phil. 2: 13. John 3: 21.

me! Sometimes food is my snare; and sometimes abstinence is so too; sometimes society, and sometimes retirement puts me behind-hand: all my composedness is soon discomposed. Let thy eye be upon me, O my God, according to thy word, and water me every moment, lest anything assault and hurt my soul which thou hast redeemed.¹ And quicken my faith and hope in thy word for this.

Many a wretched stop do I meet with; pardon me, O my Lord and my God, and renew a spirit of truth, tenderness, sincerity, and rightly-seasoned heart for the work I am now upon.

My scope and meaning in giving my hand, and closing with this covenant of my God, is further this, namely: That through his help, I will ascribe truth to all the words of his promises, by believing them, and receiving them, as that which shall be accomplished; that I will labor to keep the majesty of the promiser in my eye, and to preserve the faith and hope of his fulfilling his word, upon the account of his unsearchable wisdom and faithfulness, and not by my uncertain taste; that no guilt of sin shall keep me from the fountain wherein sinners are to be cleansed; that I will, through the guidance of his Spirit, aspire after a more practical and accustomed exercise in living the life that I live by the faith of the Son of God; and resting from my own works, reach after that self-denying activity which issues from my union with Christ as my head. O my Lord, mould my heart into this life: This is the very pearl that I would willingly sell all to get. What a lovely comportment would it settle between the actions of my outward and inward man! How would it teach my soul to rule my body! How willingly would my soul and body then be contradicted, and take pleasure to be thwarted by the Spirit of Christ, when the crown is settled on the head of the new creature, and the sceptre of government in its hand, acting as in the throne of Christ, in the virtue of his pure life, and glorious arm, and every imagination of the heart bowing down before it! Oh, when shall my inward man be thus clothed with glory and power; looking forth through all my senses as the morning, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners? This gate of heaven I would aspire towards, through that means of victory which overcometh the world, the Devil, and an earthly

¹ Isa. 27: 3.

mind; even through the faith of the Son of God. This is that which I have in my eye, although it be as a land that is afar off. I faint with desire; stay me, and strengthen me with the flagons of hope, O Thou who hast suffered me to touch the skirt of thy garment, and brought me within the covenant of thy grace.

When I consider the sovereignty of God, that he doth whatsoever he will in heaven and earth; that sometimes he has deserted his people as to powerful communications of grace; as it was with David, Peter, and others, in the time of their sinful backslidings. When I consider these things, I begin to stagger about the immutability of his purpose, and that uninterrupted good-will which he declares in the covenant, where he saith, "I will not turn away from them to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."¹ And, therefore, to guard against this heart-sinking mistake, I resolve to nourish the faith of his constant, unfailing love and good-will in his covenant, upon the following grounds: That his nature is unchangeable; for God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent;² that nothing can come to pass but what is the effect of his purpose;³ that his covenant is everlasting, and his purpose of love therein the same forever;⁴ that his purpose to them whom he calls up to take hold of his covenant is wholly a purpose of love and grace;⁵ that he complains when a doubting heart makes question of it;⁶ that it has been confirmed by the death of the testator; that the cause of alienation, namely, the guilt of my sin, is removed by the one complete offering of the body of Christ;⁷ that Christ ever lives to intercede, and is always heard; because the will of the Father and Son is the same will, breathing itself forth to the objects of grace by the everlasting Spirit, and therefore when I seem to be forsaken, I resolve to believe, that such desertion is only physic, and to inquire what it is that God is teaching me thereby; that so I may see ground, as satisfyingly to thank him for the gracious frowns of his unchangeable love, as for his gracious smiles; and to take the advantage of that season to implore his aid more importunately to loathe my sinful self; and to

¹ Jer. 32: 40.² Num. 23: 19.³ Acts 4: 28.⁴ Jer. 31: 35, 36. 32: 40, 41.⁵ 2 Tim. 1: 9.⁶ Isa. 40: 27. 49: 14, 15.⁷ Heb. 10: 14, 18.

revive afresh more pure self-denying exercises of believing and resigning to him ; fearing his righteous judgments, and patiently waiting for the time when the Spirit, whom I have grieved, will return again with the manifestation of his gracious presence to my soul.

In all these considerations, resolutions, and desires, in my covenanting with God, my meaning further is, that I accept of Jesus Christ, as he is the gift of God, to be the whole covenant to me, to work faith, and give the things believed ; to work desires, and give the things desired ; to act for me, and in me, that the covenant may never fail from me, on account of my sins and miscarriages ; because he has satisfied justice in my stead, and brought me into his everlasting righteousness ; nor can I fail from the covenant through unbelief, and a languishing view of my own infirmity ; because he is my strength to labor, the author and finisher of my faith ; who gave himself to sanctify me by the Spirit of regeneration, in the application of his word to me for quickening ; that so Christ may be all in all, to fulfil the engagement of God to me, and my engagement in his name to God. And seeing that breaches are like to fall out often on my part, I accept of him with reliance, that he will stand in the gap, that those breaches may not obstruct the good-will and mercy of God from me, nor harden my heart from him : that so the grace of the covenant on God's part in Christ towards me, and on Christ's part for me towards God, may remain, in the eye of my faith, inviolable, when the peace of the covenant (through sinful devastations and darkness) is interrupted and bruised. And that he will still recover me again into a renewed personal covenanting with God, that in his person I may behold eternal and sure mercies, as the sun in the firmament, as the days of eternity.¹ And that by his mediation and suretyship, applied to me by the effectual working of the Spirit, I may in my own person be drawn under his shadow, to recover my hold-fast, and have my face set towards the covenant. And that he will still lead me again and again with weeping and supplications to God in him as my resting-place ; and that he will cause this glorious word to ring as an alarm in my ears, " Return unto me, for I am married unto thee : I will heal thy backslidings."² I will be, and am, thy King : Where is any other that can comfort

¹ Psalm 89: 29.

² Jer. 3: 14. 22.

thee, or save thee in all thy wanderings?"¹ And that he will cause my bowels to be moved at the voice, and to give answer, "It is the voice of my beloved. Behold, I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God."²

The Soul enters into more ample and express Covenant with God.

And that I may now sum up the matter of this my covenant which God has called me to make, and which, in obedience, to his call, I do heartily resolve in his strength to adhere unto; guard my heart, guard my pen, guard my voice and words, O thou who ledest the blind to thyself by a way which nature knows not; but thou knowest thy own way, and knowest how to lead the thoughts of my heart, and words of my pen, and my mouth, that my lips may utter nothing rashly before thee. Thou hast made a covenant of grace, and often repeated the terms of the covenant; and hast said, I shall say, "The Lord is my God;"³ and hast recorded the mutual avouching between thee and thy people, in express words.⁴ Yea, strangers are invited "to serve thee, to love thy name, to be thy servants, and to lay hold on thy covenant, to join themselves to thee, and to observe thy sabbaths and ordinances of worship."⁵ And when thy people did "enter into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul, and swear to thee with a loud voice, and rejoiced at the oath, as having sought thee with their whole desire, thou wast found of them."⁶ And in this way have thy servants appropriated thee to themselves;⁷ and appropriated themselves to thee. And thou hast said, "These things are written for my learning."⁸ and that I am to imitate and follow them who through faith and patience did inherit the promises:"⁹ "giving myself to thee,"¹⁰ with full purpose of heart."¹¹ Having this warrant and encouragement, I do here bring my body and soul, and all that I have and am to thee as a first fruit offering, and claim, in return, a right to thyself, through thy free grace, being invited and authorized so to do.¹²

¹ Hos. 13: 10.

² Cant. 2: 8. Jer. 3: 22.

³ Hos. 2: 23.

⁴ Deut. 26: 17, 18.

⁵ Isa. 56: 6, 7.

⁶ 2 Chron. 15: 12, 14, 15.

⁷ Psalm 105: 7, 8. 116: 16—18. Isa. 63: 16, 19.

⁸ Rom. 15: 4.

⁹ Heb. 6: 12.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. 8: 5.

¹¹ Acts 11: 23.

¹² Jer. 3: 4, 19. Hos. 2: 23.

The Soul makes Confession of its Faith.

I do declare in thy presence, O most righteous, holy and gracious God, that (as thou hast declared in thy word) I do acknowledge I am one of the posterity of the first Adam, and was in his loins both when thou madest him pure, bearing the image of righteousness and holiness; and when he transgressed thy righteous command, by eating the fruit which thou hast forbidden him to eat; and that I stand before thee guilty of the sin which he then committed, in all the extent, circumstances, and aggravations thereof; and that I am thereby become rightful heir to all that sinful pollution which by him entered in upon all mankind; and rightful heir also to all that curse and punishment which thou denouncedst upon him, when thou saidst, "In the day wherein thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and that I am by this my nature and descent liable to thy righteous sentence of death and wrath eternally: that I did in that day lose thy favor, and incurred the accursed effects of that loss to my soul, relating both to my temporal and eternal state.

I do acknowledge that of thy free grace, and that alone, thou didst speedily make promise of a Redeemer, which should arise of the seed of the woman, and be manifested in the flesh; which accordingly thou didst perform, by sending thine only Son into the world, having a body framed by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin; and who was born free from all that hereditary corruption which the first parents of mankind did transmit to their posterity by natural propagation; who, by his voluntary obedience, fulfilled thy whole law, and, by his death, did bear the whole curse and punishment due to me and all elected mankind, in the body of his flesh; and that being thine eternal Son, the express image of thy person, and God blessed forever, he did fully pay the debt, and remove the curse and deserved punishment from so many as thou hadst in thy eternal purpose given him to be a ransom for, and superabundantly recovered thy image and favor to them again; and that, being truly dead, he raised himself by his own divine power, and is ascended into the highest heavens, where he sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high; appearing always in thy presence as Mediator, consisting of the two natures of God and man in one person; continually interceding before thee

on the behalf of those whom he redeemed, and making the ends and virtue of his mediatorship effectual for their good, and on their behalf.

That he hath brought this state of life and salvation to light by the gospel, contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, and effectually dispensed the same under dark types and prophecies until his incarnation ; since which time he hath mightily declared himself by his word and works ; the Father also from heaven, and the Holy Spirit testifying of him, that he is the Saviour of the world, and that believing in him, "they who believe shall have life through his name."

That he has declared by chosen witnesses, who conversed with him, and saw his miracles, that he is the eternal God, and also true human nature, in one glorious person ; and has appointed them to testify, that he is the Judge of quick and dead ; and that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, and be justified from all conscience of guilt ; and interested in a more abundant righteousness, life, and happiness, than was lost before ; that he sendeth forth his Spirit to breathe a new life by faith through the dispensation of this gospel ; whereby he gathers all the elect into a mystical, true, spiritual union with himself, who is the door of their communion with God, and of his communion with them ; and, having in himself the terms and parts of the covenant relating to each party, he has so united them together in a covenant-bond, that the most righteous God reaches them his hand, and proclaims himself theirs, and they reach forth their hands by faith and resignation, and declare they are wholly his. By which covenant-union they are partakers of God, and all communicable good things in him ; and are spirited to give up themselves, and all that they have and are, to his disposal in newness of life ; and have freedom to come to the Mediator for teaching, strength and purging, through the means appointed by him for that end, as their daily necessity and weakness doth require, for carrying on the true scope, and to answer the true end of their covenant relation to God while they live on earth ; and, through the resurrection of Christ, have an assured pledge of safe convoy through the grave, to an eternal and visible fellowship with him, and unutterable enjoyment of communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit ; being perfected forever, suitably to such a state, both in body and in soul.

A Solemn Covenant with God in the Name of Christ.

Now, according to this confession and acknowledgment, grounded upon thy own word, breathed by thy Spirit, and experienced by all thy chosen people, according to the measure of thy revelation, and spiritual application thereof, I throw myself down before thee, O most holy, righteous, all-powerful, and gracious God; I cast myself before thee as a poor Syrian ready to perish, without any strength at all to extricate myself from the guilt of sin, and its deserved punishment. I once lost thee quite, and had been lost from thee forever, if thy naked arm had not brought thy salvation near, and opened my ear to hear it: and now I do here declare before thee, and before thy holy angels, that I do accept it, and give up myself and all that is mine to comply with the design of my restoration, which thy gracious wisdom has found out. I do accept of Jesus Christ thy Son, to be my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption: I do accept of him to be my only access to thy favorable presence, and to enable me to walk acceptably before thee. I close with thy appointment for laying my sins and all my guiltiness upon him; and do profess, through thy grace, that I will not hazard thy displeasure by covering my guilt, or bearing it myself, by unbelief cherished within me. In him I do accept of thy glorious self to be my God, and all the attributes of thy glorious nature to be my portion, and all ready for my relief and advantage. I do accept of the sanctifying virtue of thy Spirit, and am grieved that I have so often vexed and grieved him by disobedience and unbelief. I do own and take to myself thy free and unchangeable love in Christ. I do receive the whole scriptures, and acknowledge them to be thy express will; and all thy gracious commands, threatenings, and promises, to be in all things most right; and to be the issues of thy wisdom, holiness, goodness, and truth, for my instruction, purging, comfort, and establishment in all cases, all the days of my life; which I engage, in thy strength, to adhere unto, as the rule of my faith and conversation. I embrace the covenant, wherein thou hast promised and sworn to be mine; and that blessing thou wilt bless me in Christ for thine own sake: and I do here heartily, willingly, and joyfully, with fear and trembling, offer up myself to thee, and to the belief of thy word; and do bind myself to thee this day with my whole

heart, and in express words, to be thine, and to yield myself, mine and all that doth concern me, to the good pleasure of thy will; and that I will attend upon thee, through thy grace, for wisdom and strength to love, fear, serve, and obey thee; that I will choose the things that please thee, and not repine at thy dealings towards me, as if thou hadst forgotten at any time to be gracious. I bind myself in the scope and virtue of this holy covenant with thee, to have tender affections to all thy people who are the joint object of thy love, and to attend upon the manifestation of the Spirit and power in thy ordinances; and, through thy strength, contentedly to bear the cross thou shalt lay upon me, in conformity to the death of Christ; and that thyself and thy pure will shall be the supreme mark and object of my affections. And O my most glorious God, who pitiest the poor, and such who have no strength, accept this offering from my hand and heart, and succor thy servant, who, under much reluctancy of unbelief, doth strive to yield himself to be wholly bound to thee. When I look upon my own strength, I loathe it, and am astonished at such a work as this; but I implore thee, and do profess I do with full desire of heart cast myself upon the wings of thy power, to be carried above all impediments that shall arise from Satan, from this present evil world, and from the body of sin and death which is within me.

O Thou, who camest in the flesh to purchase me, visit the soul which thou hast allured to seek and follow thee; and cause the north and south wind to blow upon thy garden, my soul, which with delight doth long after thee, in this day of thy power and glory. Let no part of thy yoke be a burden to me at any time, but a joy to my heart; because it is thy yoke, and thou hast said, It is easy and light: O, make it so to me.

And whensoever, O my God, I shall walk unsuitably to any of these things, (for I am ready to halt,) and thou shalt, as an offended Father, be angry with me, and turn away thy face; then behold the atonement which thou hast set forth for sinners, and melt my heart before thee; lead me to the fountain that is opened for sin and uncleanness, and graciously renew thy covenant with me; and let me know that thou dost graciously accept of this my free-will offering, by vouchsafing thyself to be ready to be found, and by causing me to be established in a daily experience, that this my labor and purpose of heart (though in much infirmity, yet) in love to

thy name, is not in vain. And now let an entrance be abundantly administered into the kingdom of my Christ and my God. I profess before thee that I do humbly expect these things from thee, O faithful God, who canst not lie; as what thou hast graciously covenanted to give;¹ which covenant I do this day, in thy fear, and in the faith of thy performance, lay hold upon; and in reference to all the difficulties of this present life, of all sorts, and for needful supply of daily bread, I accept of thy promises, and wholly cast and fully rest myself upon thee, in them, through the Mediator, for faith, courage, patience, contentedness, deliverance, and supply, according to thy word,² as my need from time to time shall require. And also to be kept from polluting thy name by sinful and scandalous miscarriages, and appearance of evil in the sight of men, as thou hast promised.³ I accept of, and rely upon thy infinite goodness and truth contained in every clause of thy word, (though not particularly at this time rehearsed,) for every good thing for my soul and body, here and hereafter, as far as ever the purpose of thy grace extended, when thou saidst, I will be thy God; and that all that goodness and truth shall follow me all my days, and forever.⁴ And I willingly offer up myself to thy whole will, as thou shalt from time to time reveal it in the same word of thy grace; and do covenant subjection thereto in thy strength, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and the supply of thy Spirit.

And upon thy own encouragement, in thy promise made to me, in that same covenant which thou madest with my father Abraham, and didst seal to him and his seed, that thou wouldst be his God, and the God of his seed, and causedst the man-child of eight days old to receive the sign of that covenant in his flesh; (which blessing thou hast now brought over to me a Gentile by Christ, in whom thou sayest Jew and Greek, male and female, are all one in Christ;) I do again offer up my child, who has been already baptized into thy name, relying on thee to make good thy covenant in Christ to her, together with myself, in every branch thereof, which I have through thy favor and grace entered into, and spread before thee this day; that she also may have a place

¹ Jer. 32: 38—41. 31: 33, 34.

² Psalm 27: 1—5. Micah 7: 7—9. Heb. 13: 5, 6. Matt. 6: 31—33.

³ Psalm 91: 9—12.

⁴ Rom. 8: 32.

in thy house, and partake of all the privileges and inheritance of thy chosen.

And now, O Lord God, what shall I say to thee? who am I? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? All praise be to thy glorious name, ever-living Jehovah, the Father, Son, and Spirit. Glory be to thee, O Father, who hast begotten me again to a lively hope; who hast drawn me to Jesus Christ, whom thou deliveredst up for me, to be my ransom, and hast made me to receive him, and in him to call thee my reconciled Father. Glory be to thee, O eternal Son of the Father, who camest into flesh, and undertook the great office of mediatorship between a righteous God and sinful man, and hast transacted a covenant of peace for me, and perfected it in thy own person by thy death and resurrection. And glory be to thee, O eternal Spirit of the Father and Son; who hast awakened my ear to hear the joyful sound of reconciliation to God, "through the blood of the Lamb," which was slain from the beginning of the world; who hast been pursuing me, and didst never give over, till thou hadst convinced my heart, and conquered my will to a willing surrender of myself up to, and a laying hold upon, the covenant of grace, held forth to sinners in the volume of thy book. Now, O Lord God, let all the words of thy grace be effectually applied, and established to me thy servant; pardon all my sins and failings, and all my unsuitableness of heart, while I have been before thee musing, and taking thy name and covenant in my mouth, and writing it with my own hand in thy presence; and as a fruit of thy covenant-grace and truth, let my approach to thee be accepted and prosper; for which end I have delivered up myself, and all that is mine, with full purpose of heart, according to all that I have said before thee this day; and with a holy awe of thy presence in this great work, in confidence and hope of thy pardoning, succoring, and assisting grace. I lie at the footstool of thy mercy, and call heaven and earth to witness, that I have chosen thee to be my God, and thy will in all things to be my inheritance and my delight, and the matter of my pursuance all my days, upon the ground and promise which thou hast said, Hos. ii. 23. "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." I have said it, and do say it, and do leave this covenant in the hand of my Mediator, to see it fulfilled to me, and by me, through all the days

of my infirmity and warfare, till I come to behold his face as he is, and this vile body of mine be made like to his glorious body. In reliance on which relief, and blessed hope and help, I cling upon this covenant of free grace ; in which I do both take and give as I have said, and do subscribe it irrevocably with my hand.

HENRY DORNEY.

The Soul chides Unbelief.

Do not say, O grumbling unbelief, that these are nothing but compiled words of human invention ; I tell thee, as far as they are only invention, I do loathe them ; but the Spirit of God doth witness with my spirit, that amongst these words there hath been some hunger after God, some awe of his presence, some love to be his devoted servant, some prizing of the excellency of a pure life of faith, some holy convictions of the importance and necessity of such an attempt, at least, as this, to bring God and my soul nearer together.

And therefore, though there is much chaffiness of a dead heart, yet I cannot gratify my doubts and unbelief so far as to conclude there is no wheat in the heap ; and I refer myself desirously and willingly to the heart-knowing eye of Him who has his fan in his hand, to blow away all the chaff from my thoughts and words, and to create in me a clean heart, and pure language also ; and to gather what there is of secret panting after him into his own garner, and put my inward groanings after him, how weak and faint soever, into his bottle ; and therefore I must (and by his help will) praise him for any crumbs that fall from his table, and that I have any appetite to eat them, and any desire after larger morsels.

My Redeemer is bountiful ; his breasts are full, and he will not suffer a hungry child to draw nothing but wind. I remember well what he said to the woman of Samaria : " If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." ¹ I have asked of him, and have had his favor to wait on him now several days together ; and will he return my bucket altogether empty ? This is not his custom. The kingdom of God is

¹ John 4: 10.

like seed sown, which springs up with an insensible motion, and yet a growing motion.¹ He proceeds in the method of his own word; in which he saith, "Seek, and ye shall find; for every one that seeketh, findeth;" and shall I say, My seekings are lost? My way is not hid from God, when his path is hid from me. He hath said, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength,"² which I have obliged myself to do: and therefore, though he humble me, to preserve a watchful appetite, and to prevent some unhealthy surfeit growing upon me, which he can discern in my constitution, better than I; yet I know, I shall not return ashamed, but be kept in more wakeful pursuits after him; and while I follow him, I am with him in my desire; and if I desire him, he desires me, and there, in the communion of desires, we meet,³ till the shadows flee away. "A sluggard, indeed, desireth, and hath not, because his hands refuse to labor;"⁴ but a laborious desire after Christ, enjoys him in the eye of faith, and scripture evidence.⁵ And therefore in patience and faith of the scriptures I have hope. And what though some outward disadvantage has been occasioned (which yet I know not of) by this retirement to seek him, who knows my soul loveth him. Will not he, some way or other, repay that loss, and heal that breach? O Lord, pardon, pity, and care for him, who, in love to thyself, and thy holy will, desires "to seek the kingdom of God first, and then cheerfully to depend upon having all needful things added unto him." Matt. vi. 33.

¹ Mark 4: 26, 27.

² Isa. 40: 31.

³ Cant. 7: 10.

⁴ Prov. 21: 25.

⁵ Rev. 21: 6. 22: 17. John 7: 38, 39.

A DISCOURSE OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

JOHN 17: 23.

I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One.

WHEN I consider this true-love's knot, uttered by Christ himself, and the wondrous union in these three words, *I—thou—and they*, declared by Christ, at his passage from earth to heaven, as the contrived counsel of the eternal God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and when I find up and down in the scriptures, that the elect (when once they are quickened by the Spirit into the state of regeneration) are said to have their life in God,¹ and that God lives in them, dwells in them, and they in him;² that their works are wrought in God;³ that God worketh in them;⁴ that God walks in them;⁵ that they walk with God, and in his name;⁶ that Christ speaks in them, and they in him;⁷ I say, when I consider such like expressions plentifully scattered by the Holy Spirit in the scriptures, I conclude there is some admirable union betwixt the Father of glory, and every one of his elect seed in Christ; which is a mystery so spiritual, a sacred palace so secret, that the most exquisite parts of nature can never enter in, to view it as it is. It is New Jerusalem under a vail, into which flesh and blood cannot enter. But seeing Christ has said, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God,"⁸ I would humbly wait for the power of the Spirit to transform and fit me, and the manifestation of the Spirit to teach me; that so inquiring, I

¹ Col. 3: 3.

² 2 Cor. 6: 16.

1 John 4: 13.

³ John 3: 21.

⁴ 1 Cor. 12: 6.

⁵ 2 Cor. 6: 16.

⁶ Gen. 5: 24. Mic. 4: 5.

⁷ 2 Cor 13: 3, and 12: 19.

⁸ Mark 4: 11.

may enter; and entering, may possess this purchased possession, at least in the first-fruits and earnest thereof. And although I am to shrivel up before the mysterious heat and lustre of this gospel; yet being commanded to seek the Lord, and being under a promise of help,¹ I wait on God for strength and wisdom to attempt this inquiry. And methinks these steps do offer themselves:—

The infinitely wise God decreed to make man, and the visible world to be his habitation, and the creatures to serve him.

Man is made in a state of righteousness, and so stands upon his own legs, but in a moment, (as it were) he begins to totter, and falls from that state, into a state of sin and misery; God so permitting it, that his justice and mercy might be the more exalted. A remnant of undone mankind are decreed to salvation in a way of mercy. And that the justice of God against sin and sinners may be preserved, and yet the elect remnant saved, God himself, in the person of the eternal Son, assumes the nature of mankind into the union of his person! and in that nature pays to his own justice all the debt in which this elect remnant, among the rest of fallen mankind, had involved themselves; in performing whereof, he unites himself so near to them, and them so near to himself, that what he did for them was reckoned, by justice itself, accountable to the behoof and concernment of each elected person, as much as if every one of them had completely satisfied justice in their own persons; and the union is so near betwixt him and them, that whereas he is the express image of the Father, and has all power committed to him, he stamps upon them the image of God anew, namely, righteousness and true holiness; which become theirs only through union with him, and do only exist in their existing in him. And this existence is wrought by the Holy Spirit, forming him spiritually in their hearts, as he formed him bodily in the virgin's womb; which formation of Christ in their hearts becomes a mystical, spiritual, and true union betwixt him and them; and this same Spirit again works faith in them, that they may be made living subjects, and suitably capacitated for this mutual union betwixt them also and him. And thus the Lord of life, having enlivened to himself a living spouse, they enjoy each other

¹ Jer. 31: 9

by an unalterable nearness of spiritual indwelling in each other ; such a nearness, that the Spirit of God, who manages the union, sticks not to say of the church, and so of every particular person thereof, that they are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones ; and not only that, but he that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit.¹ Hence it comes to pass, that from the very moment that a soul hath accepted of Jesus Christ, (being seized upon to that purpose by the Spirit of regeneration, proceeding from the Father through the Son, and received by believing,) that believing person, so effectually visited by the call of the gospel, doth now, and never before, become a new man ; and though sins and temptations, ever so many do batter and bruise, yet his house cannot fall, nor his state be altered ; because God himself has laid his foundation on a rock, and has drawn the soul's consent, by believing, to lay it there too ; and this rock is Christ, in whom the Almighty God receives this believing and renewed person into that union and true real nearness, which lies shadowed forth in the scriptures of truth, under the terms of father and child,² husband and wife,³ vine and branches ;⁴ yea, as one body consisting of head and members ; and many such like similitudes in the scriptures, to set forth this wonderful nearness and union ; from whence it followeth, that no action, state or condition of such a renewed person (whether it be inward or outward) is so entirely his own, and of private concernment to himself alone, as it was before. His sins were more entirely his own damage before ; now they wound his relation, and grieve Christ.⁵ He sinned before against the law of God, he now sins in all his mis-carriages against Christ also ;⁶ and against the law of his marriage relation to him.⁷ He bare his own guilt before perhaps with horror and distraction, now Christ bears it for him before his very eyes, and melts his heart into remorse at the sight of such a spectacle.⁸ Ten thousand rivers of oil could not expiate one sin before ; but now, as a cloud driven before the wind, they all fly away before the efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, to whom, and to which, by faith he is united. His sins made him wander still farther and farther from God before, now they are made (contrary to

¹ Eph. 5: 29, 30.¹ Cor. 6: 15, 17.² 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18.³ Eph. 5: 25, etc.⁴ John 15: 5.⁵ Eph. 4: 30.⁶ 1 Cor. 8: 12.⁷ Ezek. 16: 38.⁸ Zech. 12: 10.

their own nature) to scourge him into the fresh application of Jesus Christ, by whom he draws near to God.¹ In all his afflictions he was alone before, now Christ is his partner;² Christ is truly touched with his calamities;³ his smart is as the pricking of the apple of Christ's eye.⁴

As for losses in temporal things, they were before judgments upon him, they are now gracious trials of his faith and patience, and means of purging him, and drawing him into a nearer reliance on the Heir of all things: so that his losses and crosses do not now tend to undo him, but to awaken and transform him.⁵ In the midst of his fears he is not forsaken;⁶ but through this union with Christ he is still in safe hands.⁷

Temptations of Satan and his fury cannot destroy him; because the Prince of Life, to whom a renewed person is united, has cast out the prince of this world,⁸ and tempers his poisonous temptations into a physical potion, curbing noxious humors in order to health; working the soul to more humility, faith, prayer, and patient recumbency on God, and contentment in him.⁹

The mere civil actions of such a person, though the same in themselves, yet, in respect of the change of the agent, have some different consideration than they had before. He sets about them with other motives, other dispositions, and other ends than he had before; which appear in this, that although the thing be done or spoken ever so well to the contentment of others, yet if Christ, to whom this new creature is united, be not served with singleness of heart therein, this renewed soul aches as much as if the action itself had been done ever so greatly amiss. And whence comes this smiting of heart,¹⁰ but from this union with God in Jesus Christ, in that the proper sway and tendency of such convictions is to bring the soul still nearer and nearer to God through Jesus Christ; which gives a spiritual discovery of the unseen and living breath and pulse of this union?¹¹ And this seems to have relation to that expression used by the Lord to his people of old, "The quarrel of my covenant;"¹² threatening to punish them for their sins, as they were con-

¹ Psalm 89: 30-32. ¹ Pet. 3: 18. ² Isa. 63: 9.

³ Zech. 1: 12.

⁴ Zech. 2: 8.

⁵ 1 Sam. 30: 6.

⁶ 2 Cor. 4: 8, 9.

⁷ Psalm 22: 1. Isa. 43: 2. Dan. 3: 17, 18, 25.

⁸ John 12: 31.

⁹ 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.

¹⁰ 2 Sam. 24: 10.

¹¹ Ezek. 20: 37.

Lev. 26: 25.

trary not only to the law of righteousness, but also to the law of covenant-relation.

Yea, all the labors, anxieties, and solicitous exigencies in the affairs and business of a renewed person, do run along through the sympathy of Christ, and, by reason of this near union, he cannot but be copartner therein; and looks to it, that one way or other the incumbrance shall issue in advantage. He condescends to be as one weak with them that are weak, as one troubled with them who are troubled, that he may discipline the grace, and exercise the faith of his people; whereby he guides them along into some unavoidable necessity of resignation of themselves and their cares into the arms of his divine power, and so ripens in them the application of this union betwixt him and them in their hearts. And his design being to bring his people, as a chaste virgin, to himself, he aims rather at the carrying on of that drift, than at the answering the natural desires of his people about ease or deliverance, any otherwise than as may suit with that end of his, in making them partakers of his holiness; and whispers secretly into their ear, "The servant is not to be above his master. I trod the dirty and toilsome way before you, and am treading over again every step of it with you, and in you. You must be conformable to my death, and shall be conformable to my resurrection. Come along with me, and your burdens shall not break you, because they cannot break me. Your own projects may fail, but in me you are heirs of blessing and deliverance, and shall not go without them;¹ I will give you rest."² He relieved not his own body against the treachery of Judas and the company that came to apprehend him, although he was the omnipotent God, and had all power in his hands; because it suited not with the design of man's redemption: and as it fared with that body of his that was in personal union with the Godhead, so doth it fare, in some proportion, with each member of his mystical body. Their burdens and perplexities do not at all import that his hand is shortened, or that he is really absent, or hath forgotten them, any more than his divine nature could be separated from the human nature, when the stress of his sorrow made him cry out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" As that union carried him through, so will this union carry through his members also.

¹ Heb. 6: 15.

² Matt. 11: 28.

Some Considerations in order to the Application, and Improvement of this Union with God in Christ.

It being now about three years past that God was pleased to put the aforesaid meditations into my heart; and having since that time been a stranger for a season in a land beyond the sea, and there passing through a dark vale of distance from and privation of those ordinances and that society which I formerly enjoyed; and having there also lain in the shadow of death, through a long and lingering sickness of my body; and being now, some months past, returned back to my own native country, where the good hand of God (which never left me quite desolate) hath caused me to review the solemn covenant which, through his grace, I entered into, the 30th December, 1660, I renewed that covenant yesterday; and having therein solemnly given up myself again to the Lord, and accepted of him, in the tenders of his grace, to be my God and Saviour, and to own him in all the relations of his condescending grace and love, and also to submit willingly to his blessed yoke, rule and will, expressed by his Spirit in his word; I find still much longing in my soul to know him more inwardly, that I might the more enjoy him, and be more abundant in my service to him; and to that purpose, having perused over again the foregoing meditations concerning the union between God and all and every one of his people in Jesus Christ; and my heart assenting thereto, and being somewhat refreshed in those truths of God, about the nature and advantageous effects of this mysterious union: and considering how greatly the faith and improvement of this astonishing privilege would conduce to carry on the ends of my covenant with God, of his (for so he persuaded my heart to believe) with me, I thought it necessary to employ a present providential retirement on this 29th of January, 1663, (and so from time to time, as God shall permit and assist me) to improve this gospel-truth, of a-believer's union with God in Christ, for my soul's further nourishment, strength, and establishment, as the principal inlet, both of new life, and of all spiritual vigor and activity.

My inquiry then, at this time, is, how to set up this mirror so before the eyes of my mind, that I may, by application thereof, be thoroughly transformed into the same

image, and to clear the pipes, that the life and spirit of this union with Christ, and the Father in him, may enter into my soul, and make me effectually to partake thereof, live thereby, and act therein.

Breathe, O Almighty Spirit, upon my thoughts, fetch in my heart, and prostrate it at the feet of thy infinite grace and power, for purging, help, and healing; for light, life, and blessing, in this most necessary travail of my soul. How long shall I view mysteries of life, without a suitable living transformation? When shall the light of life appear? When shall Christ be so formed in me, that the man-child of power and glory may be brought forth, ruling and new-forming my poor soul? Say, Oh! say to my soul, 'I am come, yea, I am come, not only to make thee to understand, but understandingly to receive the mystery of this union, and to be efficaciously united, and actually to live in the motions and exercise of this union-life.' So be it, O my God, who art the Spirit of all grace: so be it.

1. This union is pure in its nature. The Son of God emptied himself, in descending to assume, and be united to, the nature of man, and therein to the likeness of sinful flesh; and so works up every adopted child, through emptying it from all the wisdom and strength of the first Adam, and from all the guilt and pollution derived thence, to the participation of union with him in the Spirit.

No unclean thing can enter in thither. There can be no union but under consideration of perfect purity, effected by "the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ." He took on him our nature, and was personally united thereto; by which means the sin of our nature was imputed to his person, but could never be united to his person; for he was still sinless while he bare the likeness of "sinful flesh."¹ And therefore the real spiritual union which believers have with him, is, in the nature of it, pure and sinless; and their persons, as they stand in that union, without spot;² for, in that respect, they are wholly brought over from the stock of the first Adam, into the second, and return back no more, although the polluted nature of the first Adam sticks in their flesh, till its dissolution and total change. And from thence it follows, that the Spirit of Christ, in applying this mystical union with him to the soul, by faith, draws the soul of a be-

¹ Heb. 4: 15.

² Col. 1: 22.

liever (having sprinkled it from the conscience of guilt) into a most quick and lively distaste of all pollution; and so divides between that which is born of the flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit; throwing aside the pollutions of the flesh, that the union may be purely made in the Spirit through faith; for, "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit."¹ Hence it is, that while guilt and sinful pollution invade the soul even of a believer, the application of this union lies suspended; and during that season, a believer abides dark and weak: and though he be in a state of union, yet he cannot have the comfort of it; but is as a strong man that cannot find his hands.

And now, O my soul, consider thy own state; consider the centre of thy happiness, the call of the gospel, the privilege and necessity of being transplanted into the pure stock of the second Adam; and what thou art to do, in the strength of free grace, for entering into, and being made partaker of, this wonderful privilege, and most secure rest.

2. It is inconsistent with unmortifiedness. This whole work is wrought by the Lord, both in what his eternal purpose of grace did decree, and what was carried on in the person of Christ for thee, and also in that which he worketh in thee by his Spirit, to make thee actually interested, established, and daily growing up, in the light, life, and virtue of this union-state with God in Christ. Thy nature is dead in sins, thou art wholly polluted, and without strength; but the least serious conviction of this doth imply some step of free grace towards thee; nourish it, and so roll all thy guilt upon the Lamb of God. Be laborious, diligent, and frequent in this weighty exercise. There is no seeking this union with any idol in the heart;² for that provoketh to jealousy: even an impure thought may not lodge in this bed. A dry, earthly, sapless frame of heart cannot be refreshed there, because this bed is green:³ but such is the bounty of free grace, that, through the sense and conviction of this indisposition of heart, it leads the soul to Jesus Christ, and sprinkles it with his blood, (Oh this efficacious remedy!) and washes it again in pure water, removes away the filthy garments, and gives it access into the king's presence: "The pure in heart shall see God."⁴ But thy innumerable impu-

¹ Gal. 2: 20. 1 Cor. 6: 17.

³ Cant. 1: 16.

² Ezek. 14: 3.

⁴ Matt. 5: 8.

rities, O my soul, and the continual returns of guilt and darkness, hypocrisies, loathsome uncleannesses, unmindfulness of God, backslidings, and impenitent, stupifying fits, do many times so captivate this sincerity, and strength, and spiritual taste, that no balm can be found, nor anything to help, but the free bounty and atonement of him who is Michael thy prince. And this is even my case at present. Oh, how little doth my heart relish and digest these things, while I am musing and writing them! I am estranged from inward converse with God this day, and yet cannot seekingly relent. I mention the blood of sprinkling, without prizing it at its due value. Oh, let the watchful eye and tender heart of him, whose compassions fail not, consider and visit me! But however, O my soul, this is thy work; "Let not evil lodge within thee; be separate, touch no unclean thing," declare thy chastity, by crying out; and then the promise lies fair and free before thee, "I will receive you."¹ Yea, cry out, and thou shalt be rescued; for "thy Redeemer is strong." Here then I must stop, that I may adventure to cast myself before him, who has the golden sceptre in his hand, before I go any further; who knows but that he will reach it forth, and I shall find favor in his sight? I come to thee, O Lord.

3. It is only and wholly of God's free grace. This union itself which I would come at, and actually live in, is beyond, and, indeed, quite another thing than the notion of it. It is the voluntary and delightful captivity of my will and affections, through the knowledge of him who has called me to this glory and virtue; it is my true dwelling-place, the very foundation of my rest and repose, the palace of my triumph, the very spring and rise of self-aborring; which makes self-loathing brisk and vigorous, by issuing itself into the soul's participation of the purity, light, and strength of the divine nature, and into a sincere, open-hearted resignation thereunto. It is begun and carried on wholly by the free grace of God. It sprang from his electing and predestinating favor, who worketh it according to the "counsel of his own will."² It is the scope of his free and gracious covenant; "I will be your God, and you shall be my people:"³ the actual instating of my soul into it, ariseth from the free call of God.⁴ The overcoming and destroying all difficulties

¹ 2 Cor. 6: 17.

³ Ezek. 37: 26, 27.

² Eph. 1: 4, 10, 11. Rom. 8: 29.

⁴ 1 Cor. 1: 9.

that may obstruct it, is thoroughly managed in the person of Christ, who has made both one; and died, to "bring me to God."¹ As for the application and enjoyment of this union-state, his prayer,² and promise,³ do stand in force day and night, without ceasing, to obtain it for me, and effect it in me. His blood has confirmed the covenant for it, and has put into it the virtue and force of a will and testament, which cannot be disannulled.⁴ And the manifestation of this is only by his Word and Spirit, proclaiming and testifying this good will of God to men;⁵ whereby he doth effectually bring in this reconciliation,⁶ and effecteth union thereupon: "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."⁷ So that I am wholly God's workmanship, who has ordained this union, and created me in Christ for it. "I believe; Lord, help my unbelief." How little do I see! How little do I taste, and applyingly possess this bottomless privilege, which the glorious angels desire to look into!

Improve it then by meditation. Having considered the purity of this union, and the inconsistency that is betwixt this union and guilt, and unmortified sinful pollutions, as to the comfortable application of it; and also the divine spring, the free grace and bounty of God, in creating and carrying it on; into which thoughts and considerations the God of all grace is only able to put seasoning and heart-framing force, to make way for the application of it; now, O my soul, compel thyself to the serious meditation of the reality of this union.

Application.

1. Be persuaded that it is a real union: It is invisible, but real; wondrous and incomprehensible, but real and true. God has made thy sins thy burden; his holiness, and his new stamp, thy greatest and most deliberate desire. Whence comes this but from the Spirit of Christ, in whom the perfection of enmity against sin lies, and in whom all the treasures of grace are laid up? How comes his Spirit to work an influence of the same nature in thee, but as thou art taken into union with Him, as a member of his body, par-

¹ 1 Pet. 3: 18.

² John 17: 21.

³ John 14: 20.

⁴ Luke 22: 20, compared with 1 Pet 3: 18 and Heb. 9: 17.

⁵ 1 John 3: 24.

⁶ 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19.

⁷ 1 Cor. 6: 20.

taking of the vital influences of the head ? And seeing the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him, whose Spirit dwells in thee,¹ and the divine nature of the Father, Son, and Spirit one and the same,² thou becomest (in a way of adoption, and according to the created capacity thou art in) really, at present, an heir, together with Christ, of the glory of God, and shalt rightfully (through free grace) possess to the full that inheritance. These are mine, saith the Lord,³ I am thy God :⁴ In me thou shalt be saved :⁵ Thy Maker is thy husband.⁶ What is all this but union with him ?

Now, O my soul, meditate again. Am I indeed, brought in by Christ, to union with God ? Are we no longer two, but one Spirit ? Can such a thing be ? I do not doubt it, but admire it. What ? He that made heaven and earth, and all men upon earth ; He who is the very life of the whole creation ; He to whom Abraham, Moses, and David, and all the worthies of old, prayed, whom they served and adored, who carried them through all their trials ; to whose truth, wisdom, love, and glorious power they did bear witness, and do still testify it to all ages ; Is He mine own God ? Is this God really mine ? Is it the word of his own mouth, I am thy God ? How unsearchable is this union !

Is He whom Simeon embraced in his arms, and said, Mine eyes have seen thy salvation ; is He mine ? He who wrought all those miracles, who healed diseases, cast out devils, forgave sins on earth, is He mine ? He who had compassion on the leper, and healed him ; He who had compassion on the multitude, and fed them ; who spied out Nathanael, visited Zaccheus, raised the dead ; is He mine ? He who preached the gospel from heaven ; who, in the garden and upon the cross, did bear our sins in his own body ; who did sweat blood, and was pierced through for sins, for sinners : Is He mine ? His satisfaction mine ? His compassion mine ? Those tender bowels mine ? Was I then comprised in his prayer ?⁷ And is this Joseph yet alive, and his nature not changed, but glorified to the perfection of power and sympathy ? Is He mine ? And am I indeed his ? He who comforted his disciples, buried in oblivion their sins and miscarriages, and blessed them immediately at his ascension ; and in the full warmth of his love ascended, and sat at

¹ Col. 2: 9, 10.² 1 John 5: 7.³ Mal. 3: 17.⁴ Isa. 41: 10.⁵ Isa. 45: 17.⁶ Isa. 54: 5.⁷ John xvii.

the right hand of the Majesty on high, where love never ceaseth ; is this, and none but this, the Judge whom I expect, even my Lord, and my God ? He whom Paul saw, whom all the apostles did preach, who converted the Gentiles, and has kept alive the efficacy of his word, to this day ; He who is the faithful witness ; is He my own ? He who is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins ; is He mine, to teach, purge, justify, and quicken me ? As near to me as the head to the body ; the root to the tree and branches ; the husband to the wife ; doth He even call me his own flesh and bones ? Doth He live and breathe in me, and I in him ? Oh ! for more faith, reverence, thanksgiving, with all manner of becoming thoughts, words, and deeds concerning him, and concerning the reality of such a privilege ! Oh ! when shall the shadows flee away ? Be very serious, O my soul, in exercising faith, to represent the truth and reality of this union-state, that there is such a thing ; and let that exercise dilate thy thoughts in an awful, serious, comfortable reverence, and reverend love of God manifested in the flesh, to be Emmanuel, God with us. Pursue this meditation till thou even makest this union as visible as may be to the eye of thy faith.

2. Consider the nature of this union. It is unchangeable ; it was made in God's decree, before all time, and constituted for eternity. The bond is God's faithfulness and love. It is an indissoluble marriage ; an ingrafture into the fulness, fountain, and perfection of life. It is the purchase, possession, and unwithering inheritance of Him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It is reciprocal ; Christ is thine, and thou art his ; "My beloved is mine, and I am his."¹ What shall I give thee ? saith Christ. Not only a kingdom, but myself. What shall I render ? saith the soul. Not only all my praises, but my whole self. Possess me, rule me, fill me ; take my heart, and give me thine. Let thy love be shed into my heart with a ravishing inundation ; and let my love be tender, fervent, pure, and find no object elsewhere but thee. It is a union that hath distinguishing excellency in it, a remnant chosen out of many ; between which remnant and the rest, nothing made the difference but the free choice of God. It is a union created of contraries, made up of unreconciled parties, who were at the extremest enmity, and now become

¹ Cant. 2: 16.

of the most absolute and affectionate amity ; so it is in Christ, and so it is (in the seed of it) in all the persons united to him. A union in which the party wronged, voluntarily began to love first,¹ and wooed the offending party to a reconciliation. It issued from that peremptory, yet deliberate sentence, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." It is in short a union, in all respects, wonderfully made. And what thoughts are sufficient for these things ?

3. Consider the privileges of this union, which are all on the sinner's side. Christ is exalted to give, and sinners called up to receive. And what must sinners receive, who are received into this union ? Come in, O my soul, for thy share, for the treasury is unspeakably rich. Through this Emmanuel-knot of union, God is not ashamed to be called the God of poor sinners ; only as he changeth their state, he changeth their names. They are now, in proper, true appellation, saints, though sin remains in them : they are beloved, who were not beloved ; they are sons and daughters of God ; every one is a prince by a second birth : they are taken out of prison, and do sit at the King's table ; their filthy garments are removed away, and they are clothed with white raiment ; they are delivered from the pit, and return thither no more ; they have a goodly heritage, God himself is their portion ; all the power, truth, wisdom, goodness, and mercy that ever God made known to, and for, his people, in all ages, is their inheritance ; all the promises and providences which God made and wrought at any time, are for their use, experience, teaching, and comfort ; all the directions, examples, and precepts in the scriptures, and all the reproofs and threatenings there, are for their learning, consolation and discipline, to purge, strengthen and guard them, till the old man be quite destroyed, till they arrive beyond sin, change and hazard : their society is with the Spirit of the Father and the Son, with the image of Christ in his people, the mind of Christ in his word, the breath, presence, and blessing of Christ in his ordinances ; their sufferings, difficulties, and fears have lost their destroying, deadly sting ; their life is Christ in them the hope of glory ; their end is peace ; their death is their gain. However it is for a season with their outward or inward man, they are never otherwise than the blessed of the Lord, and the objects of his delight, care,

¹ 1 John 4: 19.

good-will and protection, Jer. xxxii. 38—41 ; Isa. xxvii. 3 ; and after this life, that unutterable blessedness which they are to enjoy when they shall be ever with the Lord, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can any heart to the full understand ;" much less can my meditation reach it, or pen declare it, only I may say, it is an exceeding — excellent — eternal *WEIGHT of glory!* Consider these privileges, O my soul, make the most of them. This prize is in thy hand ; be not as a fool that has no heart ; muse the matter, peruse the scriptures, and muse it again and again. These are not vain glosses, or pleasingly devised fables ; the things are real, glorious and great. Have often and large thoughts of this union with Christ ; let the application of it dwell with thee day and night.

Improvement.

Improve this union by exercise. And that thou mayest come up to a clearer vision of this fountain of life, and drink abundantly of the water thereof, visit it often, pry modestly, reverentially, and seriously into it ; not for curiosity, but for transformation. It is all thy portion ; a portion that hath seven portions in it, all portion in it.¹ He that by faith overcometh, and wins this prize, shall inherit all things : for "I (saith the faithful witness) will be his God, and he shall be my Son."² Here is the union, and the privilege also. Familiarize this mystery of union with Christ, by remembering and having recourse to it, in the use of all ordinances of worship, in all Christian duties, in all use of gifts, in all conditions of life ; in all seasons, day and night, in the exercise of every grace. Send up many ejaculatory visits. Stand upon thy watch continually. Let this word always ring in thine ear, "Without Me (separate from me) ye can do nothing."³ Beware of cooling, beware of dismay ; remember this union is grounded on God's eternal, unchangeable love ; his faithfulness upholds it ; it is as the sun in the firmament ; thou hast but a little time to take hold of it ; the ruin of this union is the only thing which thine enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil aim at. And now, O my precious soul, rouse up thyself to this exercise ; "thy labor shall not be in vain in the Lord."

Matt. 19: 29.

² Rev. 21: 7.

³ John 15: 5.

Use every ordinance to further this union.

1. Hearing. In hearing the word digest all the matter into these two heads, as the main ultimate scope of whatever thou hearest ; either a removal of obstructions which keep God and thee asunder, or a supply of some uniting power, to bring God and thee together. Come to the word with expectation to meet the Lord himself there ; deliver thyself to the word in the hand of God ; hear his voice through man's words ; account the Physician of souls wiser than thyself ; lie before him as a mere patient ; refuse no potion which the word of reconciliation brings. Let it not rest in the understanding, but pass along into some real, transforming impression on the will, that it may be won home to God in Christ, the centre of thy new state. Get within the scope and spirit of the matter, for there lies Christ attending to meet thee.

2. Reading. In reading, observe, and get into the soul (as it were) of him who was the writer, (whether Moses, David, Paul, or any other,) as if thyself had been the penman, by the inspiration of the Spirit. Use the Scriptures as if this had been the first day they had been penned ; as if thou hadst seen the persons, and hadst been in the place with them, when they spake and wrote them ; as if thou hadst seen Christ when he spake, did, and suffered what thou readest ; and as if the scriptures had been sent only to thee, to win and work thee up to a reconcilment with God.

3. Seals. Labor to see the wisdom and goodness of God in the seals of the covenant. Their end is to realize invisible things, and to enforce the obligation and union between Christ and thee, unto the strongest evidence and application.

By baptism thou art sacramentally taken into, and by the ordinance of the Lord's Supper sacramentally thou art fed and nourished up, in this union. There was no other end than this, as signifying the main union with Christ as the head, and with his people as the members of his body. The virtue is inward : Oh ! for more faith and sight into this mystery !

Tokens among men do oblige, and are very forcible ; they carry in them the mind of the giver ; and the token being candidly accepted, the mind of the giver is accepted ; and in that token there meets consent and union betwixt giver and

receiver. They have (as it were) a magnetic force also, as the experience of such things doth show. Thus it is with these mysterious tokens between Christ and his people. Ponder them, and improve them to that purpose.

4. Prayer. And as all ordinances are the galleries of intercourse between God and his people in Christ; so prayer hath in this work an eminency. It is the very intercession of God's own Spirit in them: it is the private retirement, in which the soul is brought into the presence-chamber, and hath private conference with Christ, and the Father in him. The very nature of prayer is a thirst after the living God.¹ It is the very breathing of the soul's union with God; and the means whereby it is preserved, fortified, carried on, and confirmed; and whereby the sweetness and nourishing virtue of it to the soul is improved, enjoyed and increased. Let thy prayers then be inward and single-hearted; chiefly aiming at, and prizing this union. And refer all other things of a remote nature to the wisdom of Him to whom thou art united. Speak to him as one who is in his bosom; and consider him as thy only helper, and thy most sure friend. Come reverently, believingly, with resignation of thine heart to his, and so creep forward into an humble intimacy and familiarity with thy God. This union only begets the true cry of Abba, Father, and nourisheth it.

And if faith can but enter with all its glorious train, how will this union shine forth! Faith springs from this union in order of nature, but in order of time it is brought forth with it. There can be no faith, or any other grace, till the God of all grace hath taken the soul into actual union with Himself; and so faith is the fruit of this union. Neither can there be any union without some exercise of faith, in which the life of this union begins to stir: for there can be no union between God, who is living, and the soul, which by nature, is dead in distance and sin, till faith, which is the first spark of life in the new creature, do capacitate the soul for its union with God in Christ. The spirit of this union, by every spiritual means, doth hold out nourishment for faith to grow by; and faith, by those means, settles the soul more and more in the bosom, warmth, and efficaciousness of its union with Christ, and the Father in Him: in which interest and efficaciousness, faith grows up, and puts the soul upon

¹ Psalm 63: 1.

high and noble exercises; strengthens it, and puts it forth to mighty attempts; so that the actual union of God to, in, and with the soul, is the first principle of its life; and faith is the first motion of that life; there can be no life without some motion, no natural motion without some life: which quality of motion does more and more declare that there is life as the cause thereof.

The soul being made alive to God,¹ lives by faith.² The primary means (in the hand of God's free grace) which accomplisheth this union, is Christ, who hath taken the common nature of man into union with his person; and in that nature (the fulness of the godhead dwelling therein bodily) he doth, by his Spirit, breathe the spirit of life into those, who, by the election of grace, are given to Him as his posterity; and therefore, as the ends of the earth are given to Him for a possession,³ He is called the Creator of the ends of the earth;⁴ and Creator of this peace and union;⁵ and the Everlasting Father also;⁶ by whom (as Mediator) the living God and the enlivened soul (which was dead and sinful before) are made one, namely, in the life and purity of the Mediator. He reconciles them by removing the enmity in his own body on the cross: He unites, by receiving the souls and bodies of the elect into his own property and possession. They are actually his in their new creation and regeneration,⁷ and being his, they are the Father's also: I in them, and thou in me, and they in us.⁸

The secondary means is the word of reconciliation and promise;⁹ and faith closing with Christ thereby;¹⁰ and all this wrought by the Spirit in a way of quickening and efficacy,¹¹ conveyed into the soul, and maintained there by faith, the free gift of God.

Which faith, being thus born, bred, and spirited, converseth most with this union in the discoveries and application thereof; and, by its much converse there, is capacitated to dart the rays, influence, and virtue of this union into all the rest of the graces of the Spirit; without which influence, no grace comes up to its true and proper exercise. And as the whole soul is taken into this union by faith, and the body

¹ Eph. 2: 1. Rom. 6: 11.

³ Psalm 2: 8. ⁴ Isa. 40: 28.

⁶ Isa. 9: 6.

⁸ John 17: 21—23.

¹⁰ Gal. 3: 25. Eph. 1: 15.

² Gal. 2: 20. Hab. 2: 4.

⁵ Eph. 2: 16, 17. Isa. 57: 19.

⁷ John 17: 10. 2 Cor. 5: 17.

⁹ 2 Cor. 5: 19. 2 Pet. 1: 4.

¹¹ Rom. 8: 10, 11.

also, through its union with the soul, the whole person is called a believer ; who lives by faith, both in regard to its inward, invisible operation, and also of its moulding anew the outward and visible conversation : so that a believer both loves by faith,¹ and walks by faith,² not only in Himself, but manifestly to others, by words,³ and examples.⁴

Its chief seat is the understanding and the will. Whatever it discovers, it calls in the will to assent to ; working up the whole soul to a propensity of resignation to the power and sovereignty of every divine truth ; and, in particular, to the enjoyment and privilege, government and laws, of this union state : and so it sets itself, as a mighty champion in the hand of the Lord, to exercise its skill and power in the soul : and now, Oh ! that it might be up and doing, in my soul, and so go on and prosper ! And Oh ! that its bow may abide in strength, and the arms of its hands be made strong through the hands of the mighty God of Jacob ; and, under the influence of divine grace, be blessed, and made to go on, increase, be enlarged, and conquer. Rise up, O shield and buckler, O arm of the Lord ! I have waited, and do wait, for thy salvation, O Lord : leave me not.

¹ Heb. 10: 38. ² 2 Cor. 5: 7. ³ Rom. 1: 12. ⁴ Heb. 13: 7.

A DISCOURSE OF GLORIFYING GOD.

1 COR. 6: 19, 20.

What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

THERE are four principal things which this portion of scripture offers to serious meditation and improvement.

First, That a true Christian is not his own.

Secondly, That he is the Lord's.

Thirdly, That he ought to know his renewed state.

Fourthly, That his renewed constitution does oblige him to promote the glory of God, and live up thereto in soul and body.

First, That a true Christian is not his own, which implies three things: 1. That naturally a man acts as if he was his own: 2. That true Christianity is more than speculative; it is a real change of the man; you are not your own: 3. That it doth mysteriously divide a man from himself.

This real alteration and mysterious contrariety is not a natural change, but spiritual; that is, the body, the soul, the faculties of the soul, and the rational exercise of those faculties, are still the same; and yet a spiritual change doth affect them all, and passeth upon the whole man. This spiritual change begins in the most hidden part of a man, the mind; and therefore repentance is called a change of the mind,¹ which change of the mind doth influence the whole man. The mind is said to be changed, when the Spirit of God enters in, and exerciseth its sovereign dominion of holi-

¹ μετανοια.

ness, against the usurpation of the devil and natural corruption, which reigned there before : whereby the mind is controlled into a willing propensity of subjection to the authority of the Spirit of God, against the invasion of sin, which still retains some haunt there, as a lurking subdued enemy, (called the flesh lusting against the Spirit,) till it be destroyed utterly in the day of full redemption.

This dominion of the Spirit steers the natural faculties of the soul in their rational exercise to new employment, and arrays them thereunto with new habits. The understanding has a sublimer light, the judgment a better rule, the will and affections a better object, better motives, and a better end. So that such a person is now said not to be his own ; he is not under that universal darkness, pollution, and bondage to sin, which he was conceived and born in at first. That was his own natural state, but he is now rescued from it, and is no longer his own.

While he was his own, he taught himself by the light of fleshly wisdom, and accounted the gospel foolishness,¹ but now loathes it ; and, being at a loss, cries, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?"² and does, as they did who burnt the books in which they learned curious arts before,³ in which lay no savor of Christ and spiritual knowledge.

While he was his own, he ruled himself by the sight of his eyes, and imagination of his heart ;⁴ by the custom and course of the world ; but now consults not with flesh and blood.⁵ He sees his own bias is false, and his own weights too light.

Motives of pleasure, profit, or honor, do not now draw him. He was led by his own concupiscence, but now he is dead to these, and saith, "I have no pleasure in them."

He designs not any longer his own things, neither health,⁶ nor liberty,⁷ nor ease,⁸ nor safety,⁹ nor wealth, nor honor, nor pleasure, as Moses, who refused to be the father of a great nation ;¹⁰ and Esther, not satisfied with having the honor and delights of being queen, when God's honor lay at stake : yea, he designs not an unworthy preservation of his own life.¹¹

¹ 1 Cor. 1: 23. ² Acts 9: 6.

³ Acts 19: 19. ⁴ Jer. 7: 24.

⁵ Gal. 1: 16.

⁶ Phil. 2: 27-30.

⁷ Acts 20: 23.

⁸ 2 Cor. 11: 27, 28.

⁹ 1 Cor. 15: 30.

¹⁰ Ex. 32: 10.

¹¹ Acts 20: 24.

The spirit of carnal comforts is gone in such a one's esteem; as Esther could not enjoy herself under the thoughts of her people's ruin, though she was at the royal feast: and to such a one, the tickling comfort of such things affects not, but they are as the white of an egg; yea, the unnecessary conference about such things is tasteless, as meat to a sick man; and all because such a one is not his own any longer.

When a man is not his own, he stands invested with many privileges. He has hereby a shelter against outward afflictions: they sting not; their profit reacheth farther than their pain, when a man (as in an ecstasy) is not his own: therefore Paul rejoiced in them. Persecutions on the outward man reach not him who is not his own, who is not at his own home; as it was with David, when Saul's messengers came to kill him they found him not, but an image.¹ He can answer the accusations of guilt; 'I am not my own, and therefore my own guilt must not stick on me.'

When flesh and blood demands service, he can reply: 'I, who am not my own, am not debtor to the flesh.' When sin doth vex and molest by its pollutions in the flesh, he can say, 'What do I here? I am not my own. Let me go hence.' When spiritual pride solicits, he can reply, 'What I have is not my own.' And against carnal security he can say, 'I cannot maintain my own grace, nor restore myself when fallen; and therefore am to work out my salvation with fear: I am not my own.'

Against solicitude about future events and carking despondency, 'I am not at my own disposal, and therefore such anxieties are to be none of my work.' Against the enchanting comforts of the flesh and the world he can say, as Barzillai did to David, 'Can I hear the sound of such melody? What is such music to a dead man? I am not my own.'

Secondly, But whose am I, then? will such a one say. This scripture shows, that he who is washed, sanctified, and justified, (as verse 11,) is God's; that is, by justification and sanctification he is translated from the dominion and natural right of corrupt self, to be the Lord's in body and spirit. As he did bear the corrupted image of the first Adam, so now he bears the spiritual image of the second. He is not his own as before he was, but is now, by grace, the peculiar property of God.

¹ 1 Sam. 19: 16.

The nature of which may be more distinctly understood by considering these three particulars, namely :—

I. What this peculiar property is, and wherein it lies.

II. How came it to pass, and was effected.

III. How the truth, fulness, entireness, and excellency of it, are demonstrated and held forth in the scriptures.

I. What this property is.

It is a property which stands distinguished from the property which God has in the common state of mankind upon the whole earth ;¹ it is a property which stands in opposition to estrangement ;² in opposition to that which is another's ;³ and in opposition to former unsuitableness,⁴ and enmity :⁵ so that a justified person is peculiarly, intimately, entirely, complacently, and fully the Lord's.

II. This property came to pass, and was effected, 1. By the free, deliberate, gracious choice of God ; and therefore they are called God's elect ;⁶ which choice was made with respect to Christ.⁷ 2. By giving these elect to Christ⁸ and so being Christ's, they are God's :⁹ and 3. By Christ's mediation and advocacy : whereby He takes away all that which necessarily hindered the effecting of this property, satisfying the justice of God, and removing out of the way that pollution and enmity, which stood between the righteous and holy God and defiled sinners, by the price and sprinkling of his own blood.¹⁰

He sends forth the gospel, inviting all persons to apply to themselves, by faith, the virtue and end of his death ;¹¹ and assuring them that a covenant is made betwixt God and sinners, and confirmed in his blood.¹² He gives faith to apply the same,¹³ opening the understanding to receive it.¹⁴ He reneweth the heart through his Spirit, and rendereth it suitable and subject to the laws and state of this appropriation to God.¹⁵ He presents those whom he has thus redeemed to his Father,¹⁶ bequeathing them to him as his own, to be kept from evil.¹⁷ The Father accepteth of these chosen and redeemed ones,¹⁸ and thereupon saith, These are mine.¹⁹

¹ Ex. 19: 5. ² Eph. 2: 12, 19, compared with Lev. 24: 22.

³ Hos. 3: 3. ⁴ Ezek. 16: 8. ⁵ Col. 1: 21. ⁶ Rom. 8: 33.

⁷ Eph. 1: 4. ⁸ John 17: 6. ⁹ 1 Cor. 3: 23. John 17: 10.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 6: 20. Eph. 2: 13—16. ¹¹ Mark 16: 15, 16. Acts 13: 38, 39.

¹² Heb. 9: 14, 15. ¹³ Acts 14: 27. Eph. 2: 8. ¹⁴ Luke 24: 45. Acts 16: 14.

¹⁵ Eph. 4: 22—24. 1 Pet. 1: 2, and from verse 14 to 19. Eph. 1: 4.

¹⁶ 1 Pet. 3: 18. Col. 1: 22. ¹⁷ John 17: 11, 15, 25.

¹⁸ Eph. 1: 6. ¹⁹ Mal. 3: 17.

III. The truth, fulness, entireness, and excellency of this property is set forth in the scriptures by divers sorts of resemblances, which have a most appropriating nature, and endearing influence, amongst men in this world ; which are comprehended chiefly under three heads : —

1. Resemblances which concern the property of estate.

2. Resemblances which concern a property in things that betoken labor, care, and skill in the proprietor, to manage them.

3. Resemblances which concern the property of natural relations.

1. In allusion to the property of estate among men, the people of God, and so every regenerate person is called the inheritance of God,¹ which notes the settled part of an estate ; as in Naboth's case ;² the habitation of God,³ noting constancy of residence, John viii. 35, "the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever ;" the temple of God,⁴ noting sacred converse with God,⁵ and divine presence,⁶ and great, stately magnificence,⁷ where God is said to dwell and walk,⁸ and reign ;⁹ the peculiar treasure of God,¹⁰ noting the delightful part of an estate ; the jewels of God,¹¹ noting their precious esteem and value ; and in general, the portion of God,¹² which compriseth the whole of an estate.¹³

2. In allusion to the property of things, wherein the skill, labor and care of the proprietor is employed, a regenerate person is called, a creature which God has formed for himself ;¹⁴ God's building ;¹⁵ God's workmanship ;¹⁶ all which do set out the freeness of God's grace, and man's inability and impossibility to regenerate himself, or add one cubit to his own stature. Also, God's husbandry,¹⁷ noting God's mindfulness, care and (as it were) laborious hands towards his people : and thus they are called his vineyard ;¹⁸ noting peculiarness and delight ;¹⁹ and his garden,²⁰ made for retired delight and familiar use. To which may be added that they are called his flock,²¹ noting care of them, provision, and security for them.

3. In allusion to the property of natural relations, a regenerate person is called the spouse of Christ, and is said to be married unto God,²² noting love and familiarity, and affec-

¹ Psalm 33: 12.

² 1 Kings 21: 3.

³ Eph. 2: 22.

⁴ 2 Cor. 6: 16.

⁵ Psalm 27: 4.

⁶ Hag. 2: 7, 9.

⁷ Luke 21: 5.

⁸ 2 Cor. 6: 16.

⁹ Psalm 11: 4.

¹⁰ Ex. 19: 5.

¹¹ Mal. 3: 17.

¹² Deut. 32: 9.

¹³ Luke 15: 12.

¹⁴ Isa. 43: 21.

¹⁵ 1 Cor. 3: 9.

¹⁶ Eph. 2: 10.

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 3: 9.

¹⁸ Jer. 12: 10.

¹⁹ Isa. 5: 1, 2, etc.

²⁰ Cant. 4: 12.

²¹ 1 Pet. 5: 2. Acts 20: 28.

²² Cant. 4: 12. Jer. 3: 14. Isa. 62: 5.

tionate remembrance; the Son of God, and his child,¹ yea, as a sucking child, cast on God for relief,² shadowing out his tender respect to his people; his body in Christ, and so accounted as his flesh and his bone;³ and the apple of his eye; noting his sympathy with his people.⁴

Now walk about this city of God, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, and the excellencies of being the peculiar property of God; who will be the guide of his people even unto death,⁵ and so bring them to glory.⁶

Hence for trial whether I am God's, let me see what answerable effect this appropriated relation to God doth work, declaring I am his, by my appropriating Him to be mine.⁷ To this end, I would ask myself,

Do I give my consent, and render up myself to be the Lord's; and (as it were) subscribe it with my hand, and change my name upon it? which are the tokens of confirmation of consent, and translation of property,⁸ and change of condition.

Do I comply with God's method in making this purchase to himself by Jesus Christ,⁹ accounting the gospel of God, declaring salvation by Christ, worthy of all acceptance?¹⁰

Do I put a value on this peculiar relation to God, own it with open profession, as they did, Ezra v. 11, saying, "We are the servants of the living God?" and by faith sheltering under it, and saying with them in Isa. lxiii. 19, "We are thine," etc.

Do I improve it, humbly, and reverently, and thankfully, saying, as David did, "Who am I, O Lord, God?" etc. 2 Sam. vii. 18—24. Do I present myself to God as one that is "made alive from the dead?"¹¹ renouncing all other defence;¹² and walking worthy of God, who has called a vile sinner out of his own pollution, to the household of God?¹³

As for the privileges of them who are thus the property and possession of an infinite, glorious God, who is he that is able to number the dust thereof, or bring an account of the sands of that sea! The whole earth is full of that glory of God which shines upon his people as their in-

¹ Ex. 4: 22. Jer. 31: 20.

⁴ Zech. 2: 8.

⁷ Hos. 2: 23.

⁹ Matt. 17: 5.

¹² Hos. 14: 3.

² Isa. 49: 15, 16.

⁵ Psalm 48: 13, 14.

⁸ Isa. 44: 5, compared with Jer. 32: 10.

¹⁰ 1 Tim. 1: 11, 15.

¹³ 1 Thess. 2: 12.

³ Eph. 5: 30.

⁶ Psalm 73: 24.

¹¹ Rom. 6: 13.

Eph. 2: 19.

terest, unto which every particular person of that number is entitled. But for the better access, with good welcome, to this glorious feast, it is needful to see whether the wedding garment be on, or no; which brings in the third general head.

Thirdly, That true Christians ought to know this their renewed state, that they are not their own, but God's; which knowledge seems to have these steps, or rather parts, included in it: A discerning and understanding of the excellency of such a state;¹ an inward persuasion of the possibility of an interest in such a state;² and an exercise of faith, engaging the heart to lay claim to, be possessed of, and actually and altogether enjoy, an interest therein.³

The means of this knowledge are chiefly, the Word and Spirit of God,⁴ prayer,⁵ serious deliberation, meditation, and application.⁶

The evidences which declare a person to be the Lord's are the echoings back of the soul to Him in the warmth of his own grace and love; wherein God draws the soul to own him in a way suitable to his owning of such a person to be his; stamping his own image there, and giving it life to act in a genuine, true, and proportionable method towards God again. Which appears,

1. In that mutual avouchment mentioned in Deut. xxvi. 16—20, according to the terms of the covenant of grace, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and they shall return unto me with their whole heart:"⁷ As this is the ground of those expressions in the scriptures, wherein the people of God have echoed back their faith and hope in him, by the same manner of expressions to him, as he useth to them.

As God has chosen them, Mark xiii. 20, they choose God;⁸ and the things that please him.⁹ God calls them his inheritance,¹⁰ and they call him their inheritance.¹¹ God calls them his habitation;¹² and they call him their habitation, and dwelling-place.¹³ God dwelleth in them, and they in him.¹⁴ God walks in them;¹⁵ and they walk in his

¹ 1 Cor. 2: 12, 14.

² Isa. 55: 6. Joel 2: 19.

³ 1 John 5: 20. John 20: 28. Heb. 11: 13.

⁴ John 20: 31. 16: 8, 13, 14. 1 Cor. 2: 12.

⁵ Psalm 143: 8. Prov. 2: 3—5. Job 34: 32.

⁶ Psalm 143: 5. 1 Tim. 4: 15. 2 Tim. 2: 7. Psalm 104: 34.

⁷ Jer. 24: 7. 32: 38.

⁸ Josh. 34: 15: 22.

⁹ Isa. 56: 4.

¹⁰ Psalm 33: 12.

¹¹ Psalm 16: 5.

¹² Eph. 2: 22.

¹³ Psalm 71: 3, and 90: 1.

¹⁴ 1 John 4: 13.

¹⁵ 2 Cor. 6: 16.

name; ¹ they walk with God. ² They are precious to God, ³ and the Lord is precious to them. ⁴ They are God's portion; ⁵ and God is theirs. ⁶

God loves them, ⁷ they love him. ⁸

In these and in many other respects, they bear the image of God, and therein do evidence that they are his, and he theirs. Let the heart examine itself, whether these properties of the image of God be stamped there or not.

2. It appears in complying with God's aim and method in managing that peculiar interest and property in which he owns them, he commands, and they obey; he reproves, and they take reproof; he threatens, and they fear; he chastises, and they accept the punishment of their iniquities; he speaks, and they hear; he promises, and they believe: and thus they show that they are his, and he theirs. Let the heart examine itself, whether there be this compliance with the mind and will of God, or not. ⁹

3. It appears in answering the duty of that relation in which they stand to God. They are the spouse, and He the husband; they the children, He the Father; they the flock, He the Shepherd; they the hushandry, He the husbandman; they the workmanship, He the worker; they the clay, He the potter: each relation imports the duty of them who are thus related unto God: all which administers matter for several queries by way of trial, whether God be mine, and I am his? If I am his, he must necessarily be mine, according to the tenor of the covenant. And therefore let me propose some questions to my own soul, arising from the former considerations, that I may know I am my own no longer, but the Lord's; and that he is mine.

For making way to these queries it is to be considered, that the scriptures speak of several states of mankind in the world; as, a state of innocency, ¹⁰ a state of sin and death, ¹¹ and a state of redemption and pardon through grace; ¹² and thence cometh a state of renewing and sanctification, ¹³ which issues from Christ's redemption, ¹⁴ and so lodges a soul in this propriety of being God's peculiar people, showing forth his praises: ¹⁵ and the Holy God is not ashamed to be called their God. ¹⁶

¹ Zech. 10: 12.

² Gen. 5: 24.

³ Isa. 43: 4.

⁴ 1 Pet. 2: 7.

⁵ Deut. 32: 9.

⁶ Lam. 3: 24.

⁷ Psalm 146: 8.

⁸ Rom. 8: 28.

⁹ Isa. 55: 3, 4.

¹⁰ Eccl. 7: 29.

¹¹ Rom. 5: 12.

¹² Eph. 1: 7.

¹³ Eph. 4: 24. 5: 8.

¹⁴ Tit. 2: 14.

¹⁵ 1 Pet. 2: 9.

¹⁶ Heb. 11: 16.

The two first of these relate to all men universally ; but all of them relate to them who arrive at this peculiar interest in God.

The New Testament speaks but little about the primitive innocency ; only glancing at it by implication, under the words of straying ;¹ seeking that which was lost ;² being alienated from the life of God,³ and such like ; and treats chiefly and most directly of the others, namely, sin, redemption, and holiness. This is that which the Spirit is promised to convince the world of ;⁴ the state of sin under unbelief, and of redemption and righteousness by Christ, crucified and risen, who testified and assured, by his going to his Father, that he had obtained eternal redemption ;⁵ and the state of the conquest over the Prince of this world, who works in the children of disobedience,⁶ and thereby freedom to serve God in holiness and righteousness.⁷

This is also set forth in Eph. ii. The state of sin and death in verses 1, 2, 3, 12 ; of redemption, verses 4, 5, 6 ; and of holiness, verses 21, 22. And all briefly put together in Eph. 5, 3. “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light.”

From the consideration of each of these, there follow divers questions for the trying of the state of the soul, and knowing in what plight it now stands. Indeed, the glory of primitive innocency is outshone by the superabundant grace and image of Christ ;⁸ as the glory of the second temple exceeded the glory of the first :⁹ yet the losing of that is much to be bewailed, because we did so sinfully lose it.

Now, then, O my soul, canst thou take up Ezekiel's lamentation over Tyrus, “Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God, and wast perfect in thy ways, but thine heart was lifted up,” etc.¹⁰ And mourn as David mourned for the death of Jonathan and Saul, though access was thereby made to his own advancement : “The beauty of Israel is slain. How are the mighty fallen ; the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away !”¹¹ And lament, How is the gold of primitive innocency become dim ! And how is mankind that was purer than snow, now become blacker than a coal ! as Jeremiah lamented over Jerusalem ?¹² Canst thou say, Alas ! I

¹ 1 Pet. 2: 25. ² Luke 19: 10. ³ Eph. 4: 18.

⁴ John 16, 8.

⁵ Heb. 9: 12.

⁶ Heb. 10: 12, 13. ⁷ Luke 10: 19.

⁸ Luke 1: 74, 75.

⁹ 1 Cor. 15: 47—49.

¹⁰ Hag. 2: 9.

¹¹ Ezek. 27: 2, and 28: 2—15. ¹² 2 Sam. 1: 19—21. ¹³ Lam. 4: 1—8.

am become vile : ¹ “ In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing ; ” ² no truth, wisdom, or righteousness, and my nature is only evil, and that continually ? ³

Dost thou consider the nature of thy sinfulness ; and how it doth pollute, weaken, deceive, and enslave thee ? More distinctly,

Dost thou know, that thou carriest up and down in thy nature the seeds of all sins ; that all the idolatry, superstition, blasphemy ; all the murders, uncleanness, violence, injuriousness, hatred, envy, cruelty, falsehood, etc. that ever thou didst read of in the scriptures, or other histories ; or that ever thine ears heard, or thine eyes saw ; that the seed and spice of it all is in thine own heart ? that all those black lists enumerated in Rom. i. 29, to the end, Rom. iii. 11, etc. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, Gal. v. 19—21, Eph. ii. 12, and iv. 18—19, 2 Tim. iii. 2—4, and other places, thy nature is in some degree or other tainted with ? And because this may seem harsh and strange,

Consider, as far as any man has the nature of Adam, he has the corruption of that nature ; and as far as all are equal in their descent from Adam, so far are all equal in the corruption of that descent : “ All guilty ; every mouth must be stopped ; death came upon all,” Rom. iii. 19, and v. 12, 18.

Consider, that though restraining grace, or mortifying grace, may curb, weaken, and subdue sinful corruption, yet it still retains its dwelling in the flesh ; ⁴ and though the righteousness of Christ be imputed to the person, yet the corrupt nature of that person has still a subsistence, till corruption put on incorruption ; till which time corrupt nature loseth not its sinfulness, but its dominion. “ O wretched man that I am ! ” said Paul, “ who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” On this account, the state of the person may be changed, but corrupt nature still remains.

Consider, the natural seed of every sin is a departure from God, and a violation of his authority ; and therefore he that is guilty of one sin violates the authority of God, and has a seminal guilt of all sin. ⁵ As he who has one true grace has the seed of all ; because it shows he is united to Christ, and one with him in spirit, who is the Fountain of all

¹ Job 40: 4.

² Rom. 7: 18.

³ Gen. 6: 5.

⁴ Rom. 7: 20, 25.

⁵ James 2: 10, 11.

grace. So, wherever we see sin, we see the corruption and pollution of our nature, that dwelleth in us.

Natural conscience, education, constitution, profession of religion, moral considerations of fear, shame, or the like, may curb the working of corruption in some measure, but cannot root out the pollution of sin from the heart.

But more particularly in reference to God. Is there not great ignorance and contempt of Him? Are not sins of thought more slighted than sins visible? And is there not more shame for a small miscarriage in the sight of man, than a great miscarriage in the sight of God? What customary ignorance of all his attributes! How little is He the object of the heart's love, desire, esteem, and meditation! Is not the heart more intent on other things? How little is He the motive and end of what we do! Is serving and pleasing Him the heart's design in all things? In worship, is not the heart formal, cold and wandering? Are not convictions stifled, and the impressions of the word of God quickly gone? Is there serious preparation for the ordinances and due meditation afterwards? Is the heart glad, when the word reproves, as well as when it hears words of comfort?

As for men: Is not the course of the world, the opinions of others, and their esteem, of great account and value with me? Are their sins my burden? Is there not towards them envy, hatred, want of sympathy, evil surmises, etc.?

As for my own soul: Is not my heart rash, vain, inconsiderate; my understanding dark; my affections loose and scattered; my memory slippery, and all out of order? Dost thou not discern the weakening nature of sin, that it sucks the strength of the soul; the deceitfulness of it; the deadening, blinding, and destructive nature of it; and the perfection of divine wrath that attends it?

And now doth all this make thee, O my soul, cry out, O wretched man that I am! And that thou art a burden to thyself! as Paul and Job did?¹ Dost thou see a bottomless deceit and desolation in thy nature, as it is in itself corrupted, and as that corruption is by circumstances aggravated? And being totally without refuge, dost thou lay the hope of thy help upon a mighty Redeemer? If so, thou hast attained one round, at least, of that blessed ladder, which leads

¹ Rom. 7: 24. Job 7: 20.

thee up to the fruition of that renewed state, in which thou art God's, and He is thine.¹

In laying hold on Christ for redemption, do I see I cannot help myself, nor any other creature help me?² That none can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him;³ that salvation is only of God,⁴ of his arm?⁵ That in free mercy he sent Christ to save?⁶ That Christ undertook this salvation, and performed it;⁷ and that I am partaker of it by mere faith?⁸ Do I lay my whole weight upon this Saviour?⁹ Doth my heart account him willing, able, and faithful?¹⁰ Do I rejoice in hope, and join with the redeemed in praise on this account?¹¹

Fourthly, Upon this relief by Christ, do I yet go farther, (as Esther did, to execute the children of Haman after he was dead,) even to see the power of the prince of this world broken in me? What is the temper and employment of a redeemed soul, in his justified and renewed state? It is to show forth the virtue of Him who hath called us from darkness to light; from sin and bondage, to freedom, holiness, and righteousness.¹² And Oh! that this might be and appear in my soul! To that end, let my heart suffer, and attend to some questions concerning this; whereby I may further know that I am the Lord's, and not my own.

Do I account Christ only to be the fountain and author of renewing and holiness; and so cast myself by faith on Him for it, as well as for pardon; seeing I cannot think a thought, nor will nor do any good thing of myself,¹³ being created in Christ thereto,¹⁴ and quickened therein by him?

Is the communion of the Father and the Son, in a way of light and leading by his Spirit, the element I breathe in? So that holiness is my choice, and sweet delight, and my conversation in heaven?¹⁵

Do I make designs against the old man, and cherish the new, by the lusting of the Spirit against the flesh?¹⁶ countermining the devices of Satan;¹⁷ watchung and trying all means,¹⁸ to increase holiness? Do I choose and aim at

¹ Job 33: 23—30. ¹ Kings 8: 38, 39.

³ Psalm 49: 7.

⁴ Hos 13: 9, 10. ¹⁴ 3.

² Isa. 63: 5.

⁵ Isa. 63: 5.

⁶ John 3: 16.

⁷ Heb. 10: 7, 10. ⁹ 12.

⁸ Eph. 2: 8.

⁹ Isa. 64: 8.

¹⁰ Isa. 63: 9. ¹ Thess. 5: 24.

¹¹ Rom. 5: 2. ¹² Rev. 5: 9—13.

¹² Luke 1: 75.

¹³ 2 Cor. 3: 5. ¹⁴ Phil. 2: 13.

¹⁴ Eph. 2: 10.

¹⁵ Rom. 7: 22. ¹⁶ Phil. 3: 10, 14, 20.

¹⁶ Gal. 5: 17, etc.

¹⁷ 2 Cor. 2: 11.

¹⁸ Phil. 3: 11.

pleasing God in what I do, as well as do the thing that is good in itself?¹

In matters of worship: Do I aim to converse indeed with God himself, as having to do with his presence,² acting therein to him?³

Do I labor to suck sanctified light, and real holiness, out of the ordinances, which are the fatness of God's house,⁴ and tend to make the new creature flourish?⁵ Do I bow down and comply with every word of God submitting and assenting to its full scope?⁶ Do I roll my eye towards God; eyeing his wisdom, goodness, and righteousness, in natural things,⁷ and in things that providentially come to pass?⁸ This is to walk with God.

Do I study and contrive which way I may advance the interest of Christ and his gospel, in the station and capacity in which He hath set me,⁹ and to prevent the disparagement of it?¹⁰ Do I consider, whether I go forward or backward in the concerns of holiness? Whether there be growth or not, declining or not?¹¹ Am I gaining and reaching forward?¹² If so, it shows my centre is above.

In these, and such like things, the mutual relation betwixt God and a regenerate person doth shine forth. They are tokens that God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Such a one, because he has betaken himself to the laws, company and mode of the new creation, is in a new state, created of God in Christ, translated to a state of life in God.

A Christian's renewed state obliges him to glorify God in body and spirit; and he doth so.

1. When the soul doth acknowledge God to be that which he is in himself; of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to him be glory forever and ever, amen:¹³ that He is infinitely excellent in His nature, and in His works, and in His sovereignty.¹⁴

2. When God is acknowledged to be that which He is to us in Jesus Christ;¹⁵ and glorified through Christ?¹⁶

3. When the spirit of a man within him, and the outward

¹ Isa. 56: 4. Col. 1: 10, 11.

² 2 Cor. 2: 17.

³ Col. 3: 17.

⁴ Psalm 36: 8.

⁵ Psalm 92: 13.

⁶ Psalm 119: 127, 128.

⁷ 1 Cor. 10: 31.

⁸ 2 Cor. 7: 6. 2 Tim. 4: 17. Acts 12: 23.

⁹ 1 Cor. 9: 15, 19, 23.

¹⁰ 1 Pet. 2: 12. Tit. 2: 10.

¹¹ Heb. 5: 12.

¹² Phil. 3: 13. 2 Thess. 1: 3.

¹³ Rom. 11: 36.

¹⁴ 1 Chron. 29: 11—13.

¹⁵ Ex. 33: 18, 19, and 34: 6, 7. 2 Cor. 4: 6.

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 1: 30, 31. 1 Pet. 4: 11.

man also (concurring according to his capacity) do act towards God, in an inward complying with, and actual demonstration of, the glorious nature, will, and grace of God: which is called a walking worthy of God;¹ that is to say, conformable to him, (as the word worthy seems to import; comparing Eph. v. 1, with Eph. iv. 1—4,) bearing his image; and thereby manifesting what God is to us, and what we are to Him; namely, that God is ours, and we are his. Now this acting towards God has a great variety of exercises in believers; for a believer is the temple of God, in which his glory is more excellently displayed than in all the world besides.

A believer, by his peculiar nearness to, and interest in God, is capacitated, as a living and active agent, to glorify God,² more than another who is only passive, as Pharaoh was.³ So then, whosoever is not his own, but the Lord's, and the Lord is his, his proper element is, to be glorifying God in all things,⁴ as appears in these and the like particulars.

To reverence and adore the majesty of God in all his holy attributes and works, as Nehemiah,⁵ Jeremiah,⁶ and Daniel;⁷ and as David, and all the people of God, were wont to do: to be abased before God, in the sense of our disproportion and corruption; as Abraham,⁸ Jacob,⁹ Ezra,¹⁰ and Daniel¹¹ were: to justify God in all his dealings,¹² as Daniel, with confession and imploring mercy:¹³

To honor the Father in the Son,¹⁴ and through him:¹⁵ to own God in Christ as the fountain of every grace,¹⁶ and every good and perfect gift,¹⁷ and the establisher and perfecter of it:¹⁸ thine is the kingdom, power and glory, amen.

To adore Him in his word,¹⁹ believing it: to worship Him with reverence;²⁰ and to own Him in his people,²¹ and them for his sake: to abound with the gracious fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God;²² and to confess Christ before men,²³ suffering reproach,²⁴ and death for his sake.²⁵

¹ 1 Thess. 2: 12. Col. 1: 10.

² 1 Peter 2: 5—9. Lev. 10: 3.

³ Ex. 14: 17.

⁴ 1 Cor. 10: 31.

⁵ Neh. 9: 6.

⁶ Jer. 32: 17—19.

⁷ Dan. 9: 4, etc.

⁸ Gen. 18: 27.

⁹ Gen. 32: 10.

¹⁰ Ezra 9: 15.

¹¹ Dan. 9: 7.

¹² Job 36: 3. Psalm 51: 4.

¹³ Dan. 9: 4, 18, 19.

¹⁴ John 5: 23.

¹⁵ 1 Peter 4: 11.

¹⁶ 1 Peter 5: 10.

¹⁷ James 1: 17. 1 Peter 4: 11.

¹⁸ Matt. 6: 13.

¹⁹ 2 Chron. 20: 18. Isa. 39: 8. Psalm 56: 4. 119: 106.

²⁰ Psalm 86: 8—10. 99: 9.

²¹ Gal. 1: 24. Matt. 10: 24.

²² John 15: 11. Phil. 1: 11.

²³ Matt. 10: 32, 33.

²⁴ 1 Peter 4: 14.

²⁵ John 21: 19.

And now, Oh that God would lead my heart through all these things by an impartial search, and cause me to compare my present frame of heart and resolutions, with these particular truths of his own word, and bring me up to glorify Him in my body and spirit, which I trust are his.

Let me yet farther demand of myself a few questions, which relate to the glorifying of God in my soul, and in my walk.

Is it so with me that I cannot be quiet; but restless under guilt, and distance from God? ¹ Do I cry, Return, O Lord; ² Why art thou a stranger? ³ Do I importunately long after more heart-impressions of the knowledge of God, crying out, Show me thy glory? ⁴ Is the whole will of God my delight, and his word my daily diet? ⁵ Do I praise, ⁶ and acknowledge God in daily providences? ⁷ not repining at his discipline, ⁸ but being brought nearer to Him by calamities? ⁹

Do I own him so, that the hiding of his face doth darken all other comforts to me; ¹⁰ and his presence support and satisfy in the absence of earthly comforts; ¹¹ as it was with David at Ziklag? ¹² Do I so approve myself to God, that the approbation, esteem, or praise of man doth rather vex than please me when my conscience within me doth smite me? ¹³ In case of guilt and fear, do I cast myself upon the boundless mercy of God, declared in Christ, to be pardoned, and revived, as a sufficient remedy? ¹⁴

Do I thirst after pure communion with God, so that my heart cries out, "Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" *Psa. cxix. 5.* Oh that thou wert, etc. *Cantic. viii. 1.* with all manner of other fervent desires and groans? *Psa. xxxviii. 9.*

These and such like workings do testify, that God is the highest good, and the centre of blessedness, and infinitely glorious. And in these spiritual operations a soul doth declare and witness him to be so; and therein doth evidence that God is his, and he is God's; and hereby he is highly privileged. God now will not take things at the worst with him. ¹⁵ When he is at a loss, mercy will surprise, and de-

¹ Psalm 32: 3—5.

⁴ Ex. 33: 18. 34: 6.

⁷ Gen. 48: 15. Prov. 3: 6.

¹⁰ Psalm 77: 2.

¹³ 2 Cor. 10: 18. Rom. 2: 29.

² Isa. 63: 17.

⁵ Jer. 15: 16. Job 23: 12.

⁸ Psalm 119: 75.

¹¹ Psalm 142: 5.

¹⁴ 2 Cor. 12: 9.

³ Jer. 14: 8.

⁶ Psalm 50: 23.

⁹ Isa. 17: 7.

¹² 1 Sam. 30: 6.

¹⁵ Matt. 26: 40, 41.

liverance overtake him:¹ When dull, his ears shall be awakened to hear as the learned.² He shall be kept night and day.³ Christ will trim and dress him by the word, and teach him by His Spirit.⁴ And he will be tenderly affected towards him, and be with him in trouble.⁵ And God will not be ashamed to be called his God.⁶ He will wipe away his tears,⁷ pardon his sins, and justify his person in the person of Christ:⁸ who will confess him to be his at the last day;⁹ where he shall see his face with joy,¹⁰ and ever be with the Lord.¹¹

Happy is the people that is in such a case ; yea, happy is the people, happy is every particular person, whose God is the Lord. Psal. cxliv. 15.

¹ Ezek. 36: 21.

⁴ Eph. 5: 26.

⁷ Rev. 7: 17.

¹⁰ Job 33: 26.

² Isa. 50: 4.

⁵ Isa. 43: 2—7.

⁸ Isa. 45: 25.

¹¹ 1 Thess. 4: 17.

³ Isa. 27: 3.

⁶ Heb. 11: 16.

⁹ Rev. 3: 5.

HOW TO PURSUE A LAWFUL THING LAWFULLY.

A Conflict of Mind.

How soon did Peter, James, and John forget the glorious transfiguration, and fall asleep when the temptation came ! How soon is light gone, when the sun is eclipsed ! so it is with me. When shall I have skill to discern and resist the beginnings of decay ? How soon doth a troop of armed men break in at an unguarded gap ! I cannot thrust them out again myself ; but will rather go to Him who hath his bridle in their jaws, and can both turn them back, and also lock the door against them. O that I could lift up a Jehoshaphat's cry to the Lord of hosts ! Then would the day clear up, and I should yet see my salvation come flying upon the wings of the wind, and mounted upon the clouds for my help. I have one hard task to do : but, O thou to whom nothing is hard, reveal thy will, and conquer mine. My sore task and travail is this ; how to retain a close application of union with God in Christ, so as that I may prevent the loss of tender converse, and holy, reverential familiarity and intercourse with him. An immoderate minding of somewhat, in itself (for ought I can yet see) not unlawful, has been a thorn in my flesh for several days, which has spent much venom against my inward man ; but I must not submit to any adversary : there is no safety but in overcoming. Help me thoroughly, O my God, at this plunge, and thou shalt have the honor of the day. I would fain inquire into my soul, how I contracted this distemper : And, upon inquiry, I find it had such steps as these.

I was withdrawn, I know not how, from the tender sight of Christ ; and influences of spiritual warmth being damped, night came upon me, and I considered it not. My soul fell asleep, but without any refreshment : I awaked a little now and then, but slumber benumbed me that I could not rise up. I would fain have cried out for help, but my words were like an arrow without feathers, that would not reach the mark ; and all this while an earthly and momentary matter of delight solicited my fancy, and proffered some pleasure

to my mind ; and, as I judged it, not, as to the matter of it, evil, I gave way, till it had eaten into my soul like a canker, and began to build its nest in the very place which I had lately prepared and devoted for the entertainment of Christ only. It was restless, and would not yield to Christ's supremacy in my affections, but still offered some moon-light satisfaction to my mind, instead of the withdrawn beams of the sun : and when Christ whispered some conviction into my heart, and made it ache, and raised some small yearnings after him, this glow-worm glistened upon me ; and though it had neither light nor heat, yet it would offer itself as a competent balance, instead of the true spiritual light and warmth which I lately had, but now find was retired at a distance from me, for my trial and exercise. I discerned the snare, but herein lay my strait : my judgment told me, the matter itself was necessary, and that a moderate diligence might be employed about it ; but neither that, nor anything else must dethrone Christ from the chief seat in my affections ; but I found it had so twisted itself into my fancy, that I knew not how to use my thoughts about it with that moderation which would consist with Christ's supreme government and sway in my inmost delight and affections. So that, how to divide between the matter itself, and my excessive affection to it ; to do the one, and guard against the other ; here lay the difficulty.

The matter, on which this inordinate fancy fed itself, was something relating to literature ; which I judged, in its own nature, lawful and useful. To remedy which distemper, I poured out my complaint before the Lord, and began to muse the following meditations :—

Be silent, O clamorous, unreasonable sense ! Thy fancy is a poisonous delectation : the object of thy aim is momentary ; thy workings are carnal, proud, impetuous, and tyrannous ; spawned from the serpent in the day that it said to Eve, Ye shall be as gods. Thou didst then feed thy expectation with forbidden fruit ; thou forsookest divine counsel, lost thy aim, and hast been ever since crawling upon thy belly to the earth, and feeding upon the dust. There lies something in that first promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," to loose me, in the inward man, from the bonds of thy captivity : that blessed word began the second creation, sentenced carnal sense and the way of its reason, and brought in the draught of a new

created state, in which the image of Christ is renewed upon the soul ; swaying it by spiritual knowledge and understanding, into a state of righteousness and holiness ; and giving it dominion, by a holy force and rightful power, to subject all human sense and reason, knowledge, understanding, and the delights thereof, to the authority and full command of the wisdom of the Spirit. And therefore I would wait for some dew from this wisdom that is from above, to water and guide me : and by this conduct I would lay down these grounds.

How to pursue a lawful thing lawfully.

Every pursuit of a lawful thing is so far sinful to me, as the pursuit thereof doth tend to distract my mind in prayer and converse with God ; and that which makes the mind of Christ in his word, and godly conference, unrelishable to me. That which tends to contract and confine my view of the worth of Christ, my need of him, and relation to him. That which hinders me from a penitent and vigorous watchfulness and resistance against the defiling nature of my heart-corruptions. That which weakens the exercise of my faith about the reality of divine truths, God's all-seeing eye, the constant necessity of holiness in my heart and in my aim ; unlimited and free resignation to the will of God, and a hungering expectation of the appearing of Christ, and my own dissolution. That which offers violence to all or any Christian duty, which takes off my desire to the ordinances, and profitable use of them, as if the time were lost which is spent in such work. That which cares not for an exercise of faith, and prayer for a blessing upon it, and direction and assistance from God in it. Every one of these doth declare itself so far to be a work of the flesh, and not wrought in God. For if I am wholly redeemed, then nothing in me is to be any longer at my natural command ; but my whole self, and all my ways and concerns do come under the laws of the Spirit of life which is in Christ. In all which forementioned particulars, I have found guilt sliding in upon me with a strong hand.

In the next place, I would consider what civil actions, labors, or studies may be truly accounted lawful, and within that command and permission in the fourth commandment, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all that thou hast to do." And upon inquiry they appear to be these. Whatsoever

may conduce to administer any true natural good to the body, estate, or credit of myself or others, which lies included in all the precepts of the second table.¹ Whatsoever may conduce to polish true reason, and free the discerning faculty of the mind from that captivity, darkness, and infirmity contracted by the fall of our first parents, which disabled the understanding, in a great measure, to discern between things truly morally good and evil; without which the discursive faculty of the soul cannot act within itself, or be capable of any impressions for its good from the words of others; the freeing of which would tend much to make way for the entrance of gracious convictions where the word of God is heard, or leave that soul more wilfully inexcusable: which seems to be hinted in Isa. xlv. 18, 19, where the prophet speaks of the irrationality of idol-worship, as that which contradicts the true use even of natural reason. And in order hereunto, whatsoever may help reason in its exercise; as conference with, and reading the labors of such whom God hath fitted, in any measure, for repairing the sad breach made on human nature. Whatsoever may conduce to the help of memory; as the art of reading and writing; which art we find justified in the scriptures.² Whatsoever may make the offices of humanity, as well as Christianity, more communicable; as the knowledge of tongues; the ordinary learning of which seems to be justified by the extraordinary gift of tongues, whereby the apostles were enabled to dispense the gospel in the world: whatsoever also may tend to the understanding of the letter of the scriptures; as the knowledge especially of the original tongues. And whatsoever may facilitate the lawful employments of men; as arithmetic, navigation, and other arts and manufactures; not properly serving the bare lust, but the true advantage, and lawful comfort and conveniency, of the rational creature: which curious manufactures and ingenious arts were used at the making of the Mosaical tabernacle, and Solomon's temple, in the fitting and adorning of them for that use for which they were intended of God.

Having weighed the lawfulness of the forementioned particulars, among which, one of those cases doth (at present, more than the rest) concern my own consideration, and further inquiry; I would therefore next consider, how a

¹ Ex. 20: 12—17.

² Dan. 9: 2. Deut. 6: 9.

natural, or civil lawful action may be done lawfully : so as, not to prejudice the inward man, by grieving the Spirit in the manner of a man's labor, care, pains, diligence, or study ; or in his utmost end and design therein. A right spiritual end in natural and moral actions, lies in these respects :—

1. When I serve the will of God intentionally, in obeying that law of nature which God has subjected me to, as in eating, drinking, physick, clothing, sleep.¹

2. When I design more dutiful service to the will and glory of God by my health, estate, credit, and endowment of mind, than I could attain unto without those means.²

3. When the will and glory of God are so far the soul of my natural and civil actions and designs, that my delight does not terminate in the things done or enjoyed ; but passing through them, takes up its rest in the enjoying, pleasing, and serving God therein.³

For the better regulating the mind in such actions and labors in pursuance of a right end, be attentive to these rules and ends. Consider,

1. A Christian life lies in union with Christ, and not in any of the things or enjoyments here below.

2. They are such things and enjoyments which the enemies of God may be employed in, and possessed of in this world, as well as the servants of God.

And, therefore, that such common work may be done spiritually,

1. Sanctify it by prayer.⁴

2. Rely on God by faith for such abilities of body or mind, as are suitable to such work.

3. Let not the thoughts be inordinately devoured in it ; and to that end,

4. Force the heart to read and meditate the scriptures with more seriousness, and labor for an inward value thereof, above any other labor or study.

5. Judge not any useful labor, work, or study, to be materially, or in itself evil, because your inordinate affection about it is sinful : but rather regulate your desires to moderation, and a right end in what you do.

6. Be contented in the measure of your attainment.

7. View the excellency of God in Christ appearing in all

¹ 1 Tim. 4: 3, 4. 1 Cor. 10: 31.

³ 1 Chron. 29: 9.

² Prov. 3: 9.

⁴ 1 Tim. 4: 5. Ruth 2: 4.

created skill, excellency and worth : strive to wind up your heart by creature-excellencies, instantly to a more actual enjoyment of them as his gift only, and so to himself as the fountain of perfection.

Thus have I been wrestling with a monster bred in my own bowels ; but, O Captain of my salvation, breathe truth, faith, virtue, and blessing, upon these meditations ; or else all my labor is lost, and my inquiry into my disease spent in vain. " Every good and perfect gift comes down from above," and therefore, my eyes are to the hills, from whence comes my help. Let not the poor return ashamed of his hope : I leave my success upon thy hands, who hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

And seeing a gracious God hath favored me thus far, to drill me along ; sometimes wooing, sometimes reproving, sometimes comforting, and confirming me in the various rollings of my heart in these meditations, from time to time ; I would now rest upon Him, to make good all the movings of His spirit in my heart, and to issue forth from himself through Christ, by his Spirit, a suitable supply, according as my daily need, and proneness to decay, do require ; that it may be evidenced to my soul, that these meditations (how much frailty soever I have been laden with under them) were not mere human labor and intention ; but that the breath of the Holy Spirit has been, in some true measure, present. And therefore, O thou, who art the God of all my hope, be pleased to cause all that love to, and desire after, pure union and fellowship with thee in Christ, which has been at any time working towards thee in any of these meditations, and at any other time, to be purged from my personal guilt that cleaves to the best thing which I do : and vouchsafe a return of my desires from the throne of grace, as far as any exercise of spirit in me has been acceptable in thy sight, through my dear Redeemer : that whether I sleep or wake, the groanings of thy Spirit may be acceptable before thee day and night ; and though my heart be vile, yet let it still be as a garden watered by thy hand, a soul which the Lord careth for.

Bring me through the great waters, that one day I may be utterly and eternally delivered from every evil work, inward and outward, and purely serve, live to, and glorify Thee ; being presented spotless through Christ, among that glorious host of the " spirits of just men made perfect."

LETTERS.

A. D. 1638. — *To* D. B.

YOUR letter I very gladly received; and it is no small delight to me, to see that your eyes are towards heaven, and your desires to the fear of your Maker. Before, I was hopeful, but now I am confident. And, seeing the beautiful light of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has enlightened your soul, and purified your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God; seeing it is thus, fear not, only be strong. Be thrifty of your time, exact in your course, spiritual in your aim, bearing about with you an undaunted triumph in believing. One thing among the rest, not unneedful, I must advise you; that you set yourself to pluck up your spirits, and be of a lively heart; getting what necessary insight into the world you can, that you may the better get within the humors of all people, in order to understand the better how to carry yourself, in what condition of life soever you shall be in, to your own comfort, and the shunning of unnecessary reproach or contempt; but, contrarily, obtaining credit and esteem of all, even of them that are without. The exercise of worldly wisdom, policy, skill, and utmost endeavor, must be used, albeit not depended on; nor the corruptions of the world practised. Something I do the rather write this way, as conceiving some other course of life will befall you ere long, than at present you are in; yet still keep close to Almighty God; and whereas others, in their course on earth, and creditable conversation here, do sacrifice to their wits, boldness, contrivance, and the like; do you endeavor and pray, that you may sacrifice to the will, wisdom, and assistance of God in heaven, made over to you in the merits of Christ undoubtedly. The Lord be with us, and grant us unearthly hearts and conversations, whatever may hereafter betide us. There is no rock like our Rock, no god like our God. To him I commit myself and you, for an everlasting support.

1639. — *To D. B.*

HAVING such an opportunity, I could not but write a few lines: and all that I have to say is; Cast yourself upon God in Jesus Christ. Eat his flesh, and drink his blood; be with him upon the cross, be with him ascended into heaven: by the one, to be discharged from the clamors of the law, and the guiltiness of conscience; by the other, to triumph in assurance of victory over sin and sorrow. This implanting into the Son by faith: this life of faith is fed by meditation on the mystery, with prayer, attentive reading and hearing, good conference with experienced believers, and the use of the sacraments. These things I believe your heart doth ponder; but we are bound to put one another in mind. And next, seek and strive in your service to be laborious, faithful, and discreet; separate not the service of Christ from the service of your master; serve one in the other; strive mightily to temper them well one with the other; and then, whatsoever you put your hand unto, do it with all your might, etc.

1646. — *To B. J. D.*

I KNOW you are under great suffering, and what work of comfort or counsel to write to you I know not; only this, that "it is of the Lord." As Jonah was not to be angry, you are not to be tortured with grief—that one, that two gourds are withered together. Morality and reason plead for patience and content, but your interest in the Maker and Heir of all things may truly argue for it much more. He that gave you them at first, has now called them away. The Giver lives, though the gift be withdrawn. The Comforter is the same, and the substance, though the comfort be removed, and the leaves fallen. Haply your thoughts are—Where are they? whither gone? at rest, or not? Consider whose eye saw them before they were formed in the womb. The everlasting decree had disposed of them before they were committed to your hands: leave the thought of them to the Lord, whose free love is like a mighty deep. And, oh! that the course which the Lord takes to mind us that the end of all things is at hand, might powerfully dislodge our hopes, peace, and comfort from an earthly rest in low transient things, and fix them on him who is the "Rock of

ages;" which we are called to do upon every hand. I trust that outstretched hand of his will do it; that at length we may know no persons according to the flesh, nor things neither. Then alone in enjoying the Lord shall you and I enjoy ourselves, and the reality of every good thing, when the shadows flee away. Is not your heavenly Father better than ten sons, and his teaching rod than their presence? Consider it. Inquire his will, bless his name, comfort your poor wife, and do not charge God foolishly. Seek God's face the more, and let your conversation mount higher, and then your loss will be repaid, and God will show you his intent in this. This only, as a fellow-feeler of your cross, I present unto you, etc.

1648.— *To B. J. D.*

CONSIDERING mine own weakness, and remembering you are also in the body; and withal, considering that mutual communications, by pen or speech, are required to help each other, and stir up one another to the relish and practice of Christian walking, I thought fit (in mere discharge of duty) to present my present thoughts to you. And that I may declare more distinctly the state of my soul to you, I pass by the general complainings and bewailings which oftentimes arise from pretended religious compliment, or carnal sloth, to a more particular account.

I find the reputation of the world doth much beguile me; especially when I have to do with men neither grossly wicked, nor strictly good. And I find, intimacy with these men, and in their actions of indifferency, doth plague my soul with such coldness, dryness, and guilt, that (methinks) sometimes I part from them, as Tamar from Amnon, full of inward shame and disquiet. Let me at any time go out of God's sight to act things, though indifferent in their nature, yet when conscience calls for any spiritual duty or discourse, methinks it is like the voice that came to Adam in the cool of the day. I find also a strange influence upon my heart from the ways of coveting any worldly advantage. Well was this wickedness called idolatry; for it doth importunately draw my eye and heart from the Lord, to admire and covet after vain enjoyments, and yet I cannot say that to this day I ever wanted any good thing. This I find to be both a deceiving and unprofitable lust, spoiling the comfort of my soul,

and not enriching my body, nor even adding one cubit to my stature.

Nothing doth ever make the thought of any misery miserable to me, but the reflectings of a betrayed heart; and they stare upon me, as Delilah did on Samson, when his strength was gone, and the Philistines were upon him; and then my soul is as weak as water. But should I go to number up the deceits that are within me, they are innumerable; only it is some ease, now and then, to open the imposthume, as to God, so also to good men. I know not how far your sense of the same or other infirmities may oppress you, but I know you wear about with you the same nature as I do, though, I hope, more enabled to strive against the stream of nature than I am. But whatever strength you have, I am sure it comes from above; and, indeed, I must needs say, (and my heart rejoiceth at the mention,) that I am not forsaken in this conflict. My Redeemer is strong, and mine infirmities are judged already, and shall not afflict me forever. I am directed to a sure remedy, in Psalm xxxvii. 3—5, and shall lay it before you, if your disease be mine, namely, “to trust in the Lord in well-doing only; delight in the Lord, and commit your way unto him.” Let this physic have its due work, and the truth of God is engaged for a recovery. Sometimes I am (as it were) venturing on such a resignation as this trusting, delighting, and committing doth signify; and, methinks, the very resolution so to do, as a beam of God’s power and love, doth rejoice my heart in hope. Doubtless it is a heavenly life to give up all our delight and trust, and commit all our way unto the Lord. And doubtless that is the way to fight against our lusts with much advantage, when we are got above them; and in our resignation to God, have engaged him in the quarrel. I know the advantage is very great, by some little sparks of it. And I never knew that I got power against one lust of heart, or evil way, but by being first (as it were) dissolved into the Lord, and then appearing against it in his power. When God and I are made one through Christ in opposition to my own sins, and I am no longer mine own, but his, and my faith is acting through this union; then, I may, yea and must say, do the strength and snares of temptation vanish at his appearing: And happy is that soul that appears in no other strength but his. But while I am writing, my heart doth accuse my pen for hinting an enjoy-

ment beyond what I have. I can only say this ; something of this sort I have already tasted, and more I earnestly hope for, as the only remedy for a weak, captivated, dismayed heart. I pray, let me hear how it fareth with you ; that we may, in the Lord, help one another, and build up one another in our most holy faith, etc.

1649. — *To C. A. D.*

YOUR friendly and Christian lines I received, and do with you rejoice in the happiness of your nearest relation. The happiness is the greater, in that your principles accord, as well as your affections ; which renders your condition a more lively type of the conjugal interest betwixt Christ and a believer. You say, your experience tells you it is good to wait on God : do not forget the same experience in other cases. Abound in spiritual affections to one another as much as you can, and in ingenuous marriage-love and affections also ; but beware of that which is inordinate ; remembering that they that marry are to be as if they married not. It may be you may find new temptations in your new condition, and God teaching you thereby : if so, there is still cause of thankfulness ; for God has many ways, in variety of trials, to teach, to purge, and comfort.

I perceive there is that within you which takes little content in high speculations without power. I think it is no small happiness to be preserved from the vain, unsavory profession of the times, consisting more in phrase of words, human wit, and pride, than power of religion. Doubtless, the ancient path of sincerity, humility, patience, love, and fruits of thankfulness, is the best path for saints to travel in ; waiting on God for more enlarged hearts and enlightened eyes, both to know and to do his will with more integrity. Ah ! the purity and spirituality of the apostles' writings, and the sermons of Christ ! There is no cavilling, no jeering ; but bowels of tenderness, and awful, sweet reverence in the things of God. Let your thoughts still fix there. Associate with the most tender and sincere, and you shall escape the destructive influence of that seemingly religious looseness and atheism, which has (I fear) cankered many a hopeful professor. As for my own part, I am tossed to and fro under temptations, yet reaping this fruit thereby, to thirst the more after the day of Christ's appearance, and my deliverance, etc.

1652. — To B. D.

GOD has been pleased to put us, and continue us long asunder, and we have had our variety of troubles, dangers, and temptations; and in regard we can come no nearer each other, let us speak at a distance. By the view I have taken of earthly matters, and earthly conditions, I can say, with my whole heart, the best refreshment is vexation of spirit; and if so, then comes this rebuke; how have I laid out my money for that which is not bread! God has delivered me from being a burden to my friends, and yet my body and soul (ah! when will it once be!) are not given up as a sacrifice to him only.

Brother, I perceive so much of the unsearchable pity of the Lord to me, that I know not what to do or say. Oh, that my heart might break into a thousand pieces, and be made up again by the Spirit of renewing! What a misery is it to desire that *that* might live, which is nailed to the cross, and crucified! Oh, for the newness of the Spirit, to see the new creature, that old things might pass away from one end of the soul unto the other! I tremble at the mention of these words, because the power is of God; and the dark design of the lust within me labors to destroy my interest, ruin my peace, and make me unserviceable to my God, to whom I am going. Oh, that I could, in the power of my dear Saviour, raise my head so high out of the misery that easily besets me, as to peep forth into the fresh air of a whole resignation, even of whatsoever I have, am, or do expect, unto God, through Christ, nakedly and unreservedly! You are on my heart before the Lord, that you may be saved from yourself and the world, from your fears, comforts, and hopes; that the kingdom of our dear Lord may exalt itself exceedingly in your heart. The Lord himself be your guide; to whom, alone, I can adventure to surrender you. I am again returning from my wife's grave, into ——— to seek mine own, etc.

1652. — To D. H.

DEAR SISTER: I account it my duty to hold up an intercourse of writing to you, as opportunity and time will permit; as being sensible, in some measure, of the state of your inward man. My words have no quickening life; the

bodily speech of Christ himself could not bestow it without the Spirit, much less the pen of a sinful worm, but I will send you where this ware is to be sold at a cheap rate, if compliments of self-preparedness (for I can call it no other) do not hinder, (Isa. lv. 1,) "Buy wine and milk without money." Say it over again; "without money." What? is this the voice of your beloved? and without price." Is it indeed without price? How hard is this one lesson, "without price!" My guilt can press me down; but can it press Him down who bears up heaven and earth? Can my weakness hinder me from lying down? There is nothing more acceptable to him, than for me, as it were, to lie down upon him; you can never lean too hard upon your well-beloved. Nothing troubles him, but when you lean from him, Cant. viii. 5. This is true gospel-venture:

Hence comes quickening, in the sweet season of God's making. How easy, think you, it were for you to come to Christ, if you were without spot! But are you not ashamed to let Christ wash you from all your sins? You are loath to trouble him so far, and yet you can never please him better. The greater the work of his redemption, the greater is his glory. This rather wins his heart to you, than renders you unpleasing or unwelcome to him. It is his own bemoaning language, "Ye will not come to me," etc. If you will look up to the "brazen serpent," you will quickly know freedom. There is no condition you can be in, but you are well enough, if Christ be with you. That is the reason that neither water nor fire, etc., can destroy. He is willing, be you so, too. Trust him, and see if any condition whatsoever comes short of a remedy, where "Christ is all in all;" all for pardon, all for purging, all for advice, rest, and satisfaction. In a few days you and my vail will be gone, and we shall see what now we desire to believe. I leave you and my little child to the teaching and blessing of the Lord, etc.

1653.— To S. D. H.

YOUR long, large, and savory letter I received. I discern your thirst in those lines; you are not alone in that agony. You know that thirst is a restless want of refreshing liquor; and you know the promise calls them who are in such a state, blessed; although as yet satisfaction be not

given. If a restless desire be a blessing, why should not God have the honor of that dispensation? Although the refreshing presence of Christ, our bridegroom, has not yet entered the chambers of your sensible enjoyment, yet remember again, "Blessed are they that thirst; for they shall be filled." Your whole letter doth argue thirst; and therefore you are truly blessed: And therefore you shall be satisfied. I could write many complaining lines; yea, I can never complain too much of my vile, sinful body and mind, but in doing that, I must not blemish the free grace of God in Christ; yea, I am sorry I have done it too much wrong hitherto. Devils are against it, flesh and blood are against it; and shall I be so too? Let me embrace it rather; never mourning from God, but mourning towards him, in hope, above hope. Study that word. Yield not to weariness nor faintness in mind: through faith and patience you shall inherit it, as well as the rest of Abraham's daughters before you. Was not Christ in an agony? Did not he thirst? Was not even he straitened? And must not you be conformable? I say again; Rejoice in it, and hold the "hem of his garment," and you will find by and by the "virtue come forth." He is not deaf; He cannot deny himself; He does hear, and the "vision will speak." You do well to pump the wells of salvation, the scriptures. The night will not long last, the day is coming; the "prince of this world is judged," and "thy God reigneth." I shall one day (I doubt not) with thee sing "the song of the Lamb," beyond sin, fear, and sorrow. I leave thee to his care and love, which is far beyond mine. I must end, but I leave you to him whose words are life indeed. Farewell, in the bowels of Christ, to whom I commit you, etc.

1653. — *To D. H.*

THE conveniency of this opportunity inciteth me to write to you by this bearer, who has promised to see my child. I desire that as she grows in capacity, you would be dropping in somewhat of spiritual things for her tender thoughts to feed upon. Though I cannot, at this distance, see your face, yet I know your temptations in some part, and your deliverance too; which will, in due time, appear. It is good to be carried about, and disposed of by the hand of the Lord. It is a blessed thing, and will one day appear so, to rejoice

in the pleasure of the Lord, let him do with a poor creature what he will, so he make you more like himself, by unselfing you from carnal desires, and carnal discontents and fears, and transplanting you into the power and joy of believing; enabling you really to account the offer of eternal kindness in Christ more glory than any earthly dying comfort: And certainly where the comforts here can comfort but little, the crosses here can cross but little; and shortly farewell both. Let your heart dwell much on the free covenant of grace in Christ, by prayer and meditation; and let your sins come into the same room with you, while you are on that inquiry. When I am at a dead lift, then sometimes the Spirit of God takes me up (as it were) into the arms of that covenant which he made with Christ concerning me, and every one who is not a wilful unbeliever. And the very glance of that salvation wrought by the Lord, concerning which I am only to believe, sets me again upon my feet. I have no other task but to be willing in truth to receive it, and I shall have it: and if so, then you and I shall be sure never to want any one good thing. Evil (as evil from the Lord) cannot befall us. You will then see the favor of God to you in earthly seeming frowns. No such favor as to be dead to sensible comforts, and as a stranger to earthly carnal contentments, though this be tedious to flesh and blood; yet let it more appear that our rest is not in these things, but in the everliving God: He is your teacher, and I leave you to Him.

1653. — To J. H.

I HAVE received your letter, and return you thanks for your love. Should I give you a draught of my soul, it would pity you to see it. Did not the mercy of God prevent, you would find me in the four last vices mentioned in Rom. i. But, blessed be the Lord, that though there be a law in my members warring and tormenting, I have in the Lord a little strength, and do sometimes view deliverance. I have too long had too much content in a carnal walking with God, and have been satisfied too much in a carnal appearance that way. There is a way to live with God in the world, but it is of his own making; no visible or sensible thing can contribute anything to it: and yet I cannot die to these vain helps. I shall never understand the word "all"

in Matt. xxii. 37, till the power of the Most High doth bear it in. Ah, when will it once be? Certainly that grace will one day be very glorious, that hath attended a poor, distressed heart, through the uncomfortable sights and abundant frailties of this corrupt, mortal condition. One pure, serious, true, long-breathed desire of Christ's appearing, gives some deliverance. Oh, the glory of that day, when the real appearing shall be, and all filthy garments removed, and every filthy smell be forever removed also! Let us be found among those that wait for redemption, and wait waking. Truly, brother, we cannot word out one to another what is the state, duties, and privileges, of an interest in a new life, and hope of glory. The best means, the best words, yea, even the scriptures (though not so in themselves) are deceiving to a deceived, carnal heart. Such a heart will turn the most spiritual things into flesh, and so feed upon them to satisfy carnal fancy. Oh that you and I could start up from fleshly consultation, and listen quietly, leisurely, and yet greedily, and obediently, to the mere dictate of the blessed Spirit in his word! Your opportunity and mine of honoring God in the world is very far spent already. I desire that you be for God not only in season, but out of season also. Dear brother, I thought fit to give you a touch of what my poor heart desires to be wrestling in. I know you mind the same thing; go on therein, and prosper: there is no other way of peace, but this. I am rude; but I had rather write my heart than my invention. Well, brother, I thank you for your good wishes to my poor child: I trust the Lord will vouchsafe her truth of grace, and shed abroad his mercy and love into her heart, and make it appear, as her tender years will bear, and manifest the same. Remember me to my sister, your wife, whom I have reason also to honor, for the goodness of God to her; and to you, I trust in her. I should rejoice to hear that some others of your and my poor friends had the Lord alone for their whole desire and portion: I would rather remember such in my prayers, than in my letter. Remember my love to your sister D., who is, I am much assured, more precious in God's eye than in her own. I leave all news to the bearer, and commend the remembrance of you to the Lord, and remain, etc.

1655. — *To S. D. H.*

I TRUST you find the word of God faithful, and creating faithfulness also (in the seed thereof) in your heart. I think this is a true maxim: one deliberate, unfeigned desire of perfect righteousness in Christ is the very fruit of the perfect righteousness of Christ; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, but he alone, by his creating power and love? Nourish faith tenderly and humbly; try the Lord's will, and your own heart; prize that faith which puts forward all grace, which takes away discouragement from mortification, and makes it as the gate of heaven, and the hope of glory; for the apostle found it so, and pleads it just so to us, Rom. vi. 5—8, etc. You have a good guide; give him the honor solely to order your heart and way; his voice is heard in the scripture. Believe not your own heart or reason against the naked word of truth. In cases of scruple, or discouragement of any sort, give yourself the same counsel as by the scriptures you would give to another person in the same case. The work of faith is not to make sin no sin; but because of sin, to bring the soul to the Redeemer; that the more sin it sees, it may the more abhor it, and triumph the more, in consideration that grace doth superabound through a Mediator. And here lies the mystery of faith; the Lord himself has it, and you and I shall say, We have enough.

1655. — *To D. H.*

SINCE God made your heart pant after that world, in which dwell immortality and righteousness, did you ever upon good ground (as you thought) judge any earthly friend a certain comfort? If so, then has God, by removing your sister, and now by removing your father, witnessed the contrary. If you apprehend them as uncertain, then why are they not sufficiently repaid in the fatherly respect of an unchangeable God? Is it good to be angry with the Lord? Do not study to be more sour and melancholy, but how to be more holy, self-denying, and cheerful, on the account of a freely tendered covenant; rejoicing that shortly you shall take your journey, and go visit your father, your sister, etc., and all the saints since the beginning. Never study how to dishonor the nature of the gospel, by a

sullen, carnal pleading of self-unworthiness. The truth is, self is not worthy to plead, but Christ is worthy to be loved and believed; and that is enough. If He will love me, heal me, purge me, save me, convince me, accept me freely, why should I be offended at it, and say, He cannot mean as the gospel speaks? My sullen heart is never broken till almighty convincement from God break my heart to powder; till that time I play with melancholy, under a kind of vexing delight. I trust God will teach you some good lesson by this visitation, that the knowledge of God in Christ, and the knowledge of your heart may be wisely taken in. I earnestly desire this, that all your thoughts may be brought over to a subjection to the good pleasure of God, with delight in that good pleasure of his, and be thankful that you have an opportunity to honor him, by saying and thinking that all his ways are mercy and truth. Though he take to himself your nearest friends, you do them so much right as to rejoice that they reign; though you mourn after your beloved, and long to leave yourself, that you may love him the better. I leave you to Him who can and will do more in his love and pity, than I or any friend can do. Rejoice in hope, lift up your head, the days of your lamentation are almost ended. I remain yours, in the fellow-feeling of the same burden, etc.

1655. — To A. C.

I ENJOY my health, through the goodness of God, as yet. My soul has many dry and sapless seasons, many drowsy and fainty qualms, through the deceit of heart that lies rooted within; but yet the Lord cries ever and anon in my ear, "I am God, and I change not: therefore thou art not consumed." I find it desperately dangerous to set my reason and sense in dispute with that which faith only should take up, I mean reconciliation upon free terms. If there be any sinfulness, or any aggravation of sin which seems to except itself from the remedy of Christ's atonement, then certainly the eye of faith takes not up its mark as it should do. If there be any weakness and darkness, and the soul thinks to get over it without a humble resignation of the case to Christ for help, it will find the cure come badly on. A heart which would not have a liberty for sinning, can never engage in a free-hearted adventure on Christ too far for pardon and strength. Christ never refused any one sinner

that came to him on earth, unless it were the mocking, treacherous, and spiteful Pharisee : and, therefore, I am bound to believe He hears and accepts every unfeigned request, though hardness and darkness afflict. So that I am, with my lamenting after him, to rejoice that he is himself the corner-stone of that work in my heart, that yearns after him in a dry land. I recommend you to the Lord, etc.

1655. — *To A. C.*

I THOUGHT good to send you a few lines, which, while I am writing, serve instead of a conference : there only wants your answer to every sentence, and the mutual refreshing of your voice. I can, at a distance, guess at your thoughts ; I can also take refreshment in this, that the arm of the Lord, seen by you, or unseen, yet holds you, teacheth you, and is always near you. We are not to think the unchangeable God doth change as oft as we use to change. Not every cloud, nor all the clouds of the sky are able to hinder the course of the sun, because the sun is above them ; and so is the covenant of our peace above our darkness and weakness. A small matter (if seasons of weakness and dulness may be called so) is enough, when unbelief is cherished, to make as much mischief in the soul, as a wolf among a flock of sheep. Indeed, every sin is hateful in the sight of God ; and a sluggish heart, that is rather prone continually to all that is evil, inwardly and outwardly, than inclined to good, is grievous to the Spirit of God : but this is perpetually the refuge, that God accounts the sinfulness of his people their sickness, not their state ; and to purge and cure them, He uses sometimes one means, and sometimes another ; witness Psalm lxxxix. 31—34, and Isa. xxvii. 8, 9. But still the covenant, being wholly of his contrivance, stands fixed in heaven ; and so doth Jesus Christ, who has both your nature, as much as if you yourself were there, and God's nature too, in one person, to preserve that covenant, in your stead, for your good. There is no creature-goodness of any sort soever, that prefers any person to an interest in that covenant ; because God showeth mercy to whom He will. And there is nothing essentially needful to give any one a right to apply this covenant, but a sense of necessity, and a willingness to accept it, and be saved by it only. As wicked people so fancy the way to heaven, as that they think they

can obtain it, while they desire to keep their sins in their bosoms, and cannot hear of parting with them : so, many gracious people, though beloved of God, cannot imagine that eternal life, being a blessing of that greatness, can be so easily gotten as by believing only. Or if they grant it is to be had only by believing, yet they do so much look upon personal qualifications, by which to try their faith, that unless they be to such and such a degree, they think they have not faith. And when they have got the degree they desire, they are as much to seek as before. And all is, because God has left no such qualifications, as things that shall give rest to the soul : for they are but the garments of faith. That soul that is willing Christ should both save him and purge him, shall be saved and purged ; and God cannot but account him clean from condemning guilt. I hope you live in the study and consolation of these glad tidings of gospel-peace. I trust, also, that God has and does sanctify all his dispensations to your heart, that you may be cheerful in believing, and fruitful in holiness, as one who is taught of the Lord : and thus commending you to the Lord, your rock, I rest, yours in truth and love, etc.

1655. — *To C. A. D.*

YOURS of the 25th of September last I received, and do thank you for your Christian love and tenderness therein expressed, and for the heads of that searching, refreshing sermon : for, indeed, nothing can be refreshing, but what is searching and convincing. The virtue and the excellency of gospel-remedies can never be welcome, nor do their work, till they be permitted to search and overcome ; that truth may break forth to victory, and there may be healing without putrefaction at the bottom. And when a poor soul cannot order his own distempers, yet then to consent to, and approve of, the sovereignty of the medicine and skill of the physician—Could I come up to that trust, faith, and resignation, I should then more magnify that grace, and be more fruitfully refreshed in the salvation of God. There is a pure relief in the gospel, conveyable only by the arm (the Spirit) of the Lord ; but it is oftentimes, in a great measure, spoiled and defiled in a carnal way of endeavor to receive it. To entertain spiritual truths in the Spirit, and to be subjected to their law, and formed into their mould, complexion

and constitution, this, I think, were religion indeed. For my own part, I view these things at such a distance, that sometimes I even doubt whether there be any more than notion left; or if more, what it is that holds up any connection betwixt my confused heart and that spiritual interest: I am carried up and down by Him as a lighted candle in a windy place, and its flame ever ready almost to flee from the wick, were it not preserved by the hollow of his hand. His discipline I cannot want, and live. And it is refreshment to me, that your heart is under a constant pursuit of that mark, for the prize of the high calling. Draw water still from the fountain as much as you can. Be a stranger to all instruments, means and helps, while you use them. Know none but God, taste none but Him in all the earth; and remember the galled feet of your fellow-travellers. I received a letter from Mr. Gr. I pray return the enclosed to him; his advice is very savory. I think, indeed, Christ best approves of a holy latitude for affection and communion amongst his members.

1657.— To D. H.

COULD I be more in the Spirit, I could then write with more freedom: but this I know, that if I and you have our faces towards Sion, we shall be brought thither at length. Our great work is to cease from ourselves, that the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord might have liberty to work in us, and for us. I know no such door to the Mediator as to be resigned over to him, and to be yielded up to the salvation and power of free grace: it is the only wholesome food and physic of a sinner. When the soul is widened by resignation to him and self-aborrence, then his naked redemption is sweet, welcome, and a soul-satisfying remedy. I oft see a glimmering of this, but my eye is weak; yet such glimmerings tell me, that there, and there only, lie the first-fruits, and hope of glory. I had rather see God do a little in me, and for me, than do much myself; for God's little is infinite, and my much is nothing in his sight, for me to be accepted thereby. Therefore is faith the only key of all spiritual treasure which is hid in Christ, and in Him only. And by this going out of ourselves to Him, we are made his; and himself, and his treasures of pardon, righteousness, wisdom, and perfection are made ours. Venture your prayers upon

him; though they seem to be cast away, after many days they will return. You can hardly find that ever Christ reproved his disciples for anything but unbelief, or little faith; or for not suffering infants or others to come to him. Let all these things teach you and me what is our chief duty. I leave you to the Lord, remaining yours in truth and love, etc.

1658.— *To B. D.*

YOUR two last letters have much refreshed me, because I perceive it is not the compliment of invention, but the heart-raising Spirit of God has been favorable to you. Be craving still, be thankful still, believe through the clouds. God has thus appeared that He may teach you how to live on Him when he appears less to sense: you are heir always to the same joy, and infinitely more, when under the saddest hours. Expect trials for every grace, especially for faith; winter follows summer, but the end will be victory and peace; of which you have had, I perceive, a taste. Covet Christ's image insatiably, and to be at his disposal universally; and let us bless his name night and day. I want a heart to bless God enough for his goodness to us: the day hastens, in which it will be done perfectly. I am in health of body, laboring under the shameful load of an evil heart; yet in hope of victory, through Him who liveth forever to make intercession for them who desire to come to God through him only. Amongst all business, public or private, it is good for you and me to be watchful, to keep a constant motion upwards: Constant tenderness is a rich treasury. Grace is that incomparable endowment, enough to put a lustre upon every other requisite. What alliance is greater than to be allied in the communion of the Spirit? I perceive God hath favored you with an affliction, I hope you will not go without the blessing of it. Be more importunate for a blessing, than anxious about the loss, or troubling your thoughts about persons or instruments, or about future events; but commit yourself and estate, body and soul, to God, as unto a faithful Creator, and rejoice in the hope of a better resurrection, and groan for nothing but the body of sin, till it is groaned out of doors.

1658.— *To S. D. H.*

I AM glad to see you strive to get up the hill, and that you take the right way. Go on, and prosper, he is near who justifieth you. Though he stands (as it were) behind the wall, he hears your request, and all your desire is before him: he himself has undertaken the whole. Light is sown for you, the harvest is coming: Lift up your head, your redemption is sure, and your water shall not fail. You can never lay too much burden on Christ; he bears up the pillars of the earth, and has already borne your burden. The work is over with him, and shall be over with you too, shortly: Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. You are not your own workmanship, but his: He has lifted up his hand to heaven, and sworn, that blessing, he will bless you, and shortly tread Satan, and every corruption under your feet. Cling about him, he will not shake you off; your prayers are heard, your person is accepted. Be not weary; everlasting arms are under you, the battle you are in will prosper. The greatness of his power is not to amaze you, but to support you; his righteousness is to justify you, that you may not fear your Judge, but reverence and love him who has washed you in his own blood: the business is done already, and now there is no revoking of it. The more difficulties appear, the more you are to triumph in him who overcame by the blood of his cross, and will not leave you shelterless. He can teach you better than I; I leave you to him. I perceive by your letter, that my dear friend R. M. is dead; or rather now, I confidently believe, perfectly alive, beyond sin and toil. I know you are not wanting towards that poor child; take her to heaven, as much as you can, along with you. Let us pray one for another, and we shall not seek that blessed face of his in vain. I might write much of my own leanness and unworthiness, and I would I could be more sensible of it, so as to lay my starved limbs on that free, heart-reviving, heart-renewing covenant of grace, confirmed in the person of a crucified and risen Redeemer, the fountain of acceptance, pardon, life, and health: In his hands I desire to leave you, and remain, etc.

1658. — To D. II.

SUCH is our bodily condition, that we cannot make up these distances, without the intervening of letters or friends; but that communion which, I trust, we have mutually (though under much darkness) with the Father and Son, by the Spirit of grace, needs no such helps. I trust our prayers meet at a shorter cut, and that we strive together in the same faith of the gospel. It may be you find you have much to do to keep your head above water; I find the same: I bear about the same body of death, and find the same contradiction in my corrupt and confused nature as you do. One Christian seems to outrun another, till God reveals the mischievous hell that dwells in our flesh. Then Paul himself will cry out, Oh wretched man that I am! And Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, be forced to say, All our righteousness is as filthy rags. What are our poor glimmerings to the brightness of the Sun of righteousness? Were there not an equal relief in the Mediator for the youngest and the weakest of the flock, as for them who have long travelled in the profession of godliness, the accoutrements of the most experienced Christians would shrivel up and wither away; and leave nothing behind in the soul, but such an outcry as that, "Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" But he that is in the "burning bush" keeps it from consuming. It was only the likeness of the Son of man that made the three children in Daniel walk up and down in the fire, safe from burning. "I will be with you, saith God, in the fire and in the water." His name is "Emmanuel, God with us." His covenant is free, the purpose of grace wonderful; his good-will ariseth only from himself, and will not, cannot change: and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. We little think oftentimes (in our fear and discouragement) how far our weak prayers reach: they are like an arrow gone out of our sight, and we (many times) think them lost and forgot; and consider not, that every dry groan and watery tear is put into the bottle, and winds up, through the ascending virtue of the mediation of Him who is one with the Father, to the throne of acceptance. Let us comfort one another in this hope, that we may labor and travail hard, but not faint by the way. I remain yours in the highest bond, etc.

1658. — *To B. D.*

I RECEIVED the sad news of my deceased sister ; blessed be the name of Him who was dead, and is alive, and will shortly cause the dead to come forth ! That will be a blessed day for all the redeemed to visit their precious kindred. And blessed be He, who has in any gracious manner watered your heart ; let him favorably add this also, “ That upon all the glory there be a defence.” This is by my precious friend, whom God has mightily rescued by his grace. I want nothing but more communion with that God, which you pant after ; more faith, more trust and resting upon him, more satisfaction in him ; that I may say, and believe, and sing, “ God is my portion.” Will he not rend the heavens ? Will he not rend these hearts, and appear ; that the mountains of all our fears and disquiets “ may skip like lambs before the presence of our God ? ” When shall the promises be substance, and a faithful, compassionate God be an abundant salvation ? Can the lowering face of an uncertain world, and the things thereof, make the promise and unchangeable good will of God of no effect ? Doth not he whisper through every dark cloud, and say, “ Come up hither ? ” The Lord open our ears to instruction, and let us rejoice to take our leave of that which will not profit. Every prayer we make saith, “ We have chosen an invisible inheritance.” Oh, what a glorious thing is faith at a desperate pinch ! Then is his throne high and lifted up, when Christ is in profit and loss, in life and death, the heart’s advantage above these lower ebbings and flowings. The Lord be with you, etc.

1659. — *To D. H.*

SEEING our time here is a warfare, it is a comfort to perceive the Lord’s presence with any poor soul, so as to make it stand out in hope and prayer, while temptations and corruptions, like fiery darts, are flying thick on every side. It never goes desperately ill with those that travel towards Zion, and are acquainted with assaults from Satan, and heart-treachery from themselves, till they begin secretly to whisper rebellion against the covenant and law of God’s grace, and say, “ There is no help for me in God.” David’s excellency lay not so much in his being freer from sin and sinful mis-

carriages than others ; but in this, that he could not endure to say, or hear others say, of his soul, "There is no help for him in God," Psalm iii. 2, xlii., 10, and lxxi. 11. That was the anchor that made him ride out the storms, and the rope that drew him up out of many a deep pit. Let us use the same means with reverence, and yet with freedom. God is a jealous God, and cannot endure to be accounted changeable, Jer. xxxiii. 24—26. He keeps both ends of the covenant, and will not give the glory of any part of that trust out of his own hands. Every desire, every thirst, and exercise of resolution or hope heavenwards, and every soul and body deliverance to such, ariseth from this, that God is faithful, 2 Thess. iii. 3, though our labor and prayer ought therein also to be employed, as the means which God has commanded on our part, for a closing with the efficacious virtue of his Spirit, by believing : whereby the force of Christ's death and resurrection becomes singly applicable to remove guilt, and confer a gracious conformity to his nature, and to the law of righteousness in the soul. I see you level at the right mark, and own your relief from the right place ; and why may I not say, you shall yet see greater things than these ? etc.

1659. — *To D. H.*

I PERCEIVE B. Cr. hath much trouble through indisposition of body, and it is good it should be so, though disquieting to the flesh ; and you have a gracious share I perceive also. In such cases it will be some help to turn our thoughts from poring upon the affliction itself, and endeavor, by all means, to find out the lesson which God is teaching thereby ; for that is properly and truly our work, in that Christ hath borne the curse for us : he hath taken away the wrathful penalty, and left only an awakening and instructive nature in all the afflictions that his people meet with, Isa. xxvii. 7—9, and lxiii. 9, Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, etc. Oh that we could believe this, and redeem our precious time, to learn the will of God, and to be fashioned more to his likeness under earthly fears or burdens ! As for Betty's recreation, I would have her, amongst other things, learn to sing ; that she may use the glorious ordinance of singing Psalms with the more delight. I must, as often as I can, put you in mind, and let us put one another in mind, while we are in this world of sin and

trouble, that we labor constantly and earnestly to preserve the health of the inward man.

Oh! to keep a spiritual palate for right relishing spiritual food; and be every day girding on us afresh the long robe of Christ's righteousness, that we may be suitable to the state we are called to, the state of communion with the Father himself, and Jesus Christ. It is a garment that grows fresher and fresher to us by wearing. It is a garment that will never sully, but cleanseth the soul that wears it. It is defensive against cold, fainty fits, and the best armor that can be against the rage of sin and Satan. It is a glorious robe, and yet it hath a singular virtue to make the soul that wears it humble. The first garment that the first Adam made did somewhat hide his shame, but could not remove his guilt and fear; and therefore he ran with it from God. But this garment of the second Adam has alone the excellency to bring souls to God; yea, to his very throne, with boldness. They that wear this robe carry salvation about them, and are objects of delight to the Father, Son, and Spirit, and to the blessed angels, wherever they go, and whatever their condition be here: and as Job's friend said, (Job v. 27), so may I; that "So it is; hear it, and know it for thy good." I leave you to the Lord, and remain, etc.

1659. — *To B. D.*

As for your own fears under which you wrestle, it is not the having or wanting earthly tranquillity that is any proper character of God's love or anger; but the discovering mark of that, lies chiefly in the way of our deportment under such trials, agreeable to the practice of the saints, recommended to us in the scriptures by the Spirit of God. For there is no temptation can befall us, which has not been (for substance) the trial of them, who have endured and overcome before us: and you are required to remember their faith and patience, and the issue God gave, that you do not give way or faint, as if God had forsaken the government of the world, or changed the nature of the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." I have been laboring to live upon the naked promises of God in reference to my outward concerns, as if I were in the want of all things; and do think, if I could come at it, it were a glorious portion. None but exercised believers can tell truly, why the promises are called rich and

precious, and how much lies in that word, "rich in faith," James ii. 5. And what extensive satisfaction and glory lies in that word, GOOD; "All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

You know these things, etc.. As fears or outward disappointments abound, fly still a higher pitch; till you rejoice, in manifold trials, that God counts you worthy to be listed among them who could not be made happy by earthly things, nor miserable in the want of all things, whether estate, friends, health, credit or anything else, whilst they could flee to a higher Rock. The Lord direct you, and make you launch forth upon the power, and in the wisdom, and under the shelter, of the Lord: infinite and abundant is that shelter. Oh! that you and I could, with Luther, sing over all our sins and fears, be what they will, the xlv. Psalm; "God is a refuge for us, a present help in trouble." Here is our comfort, this world is not our country; a few days will call us hence. The good Lord manage all your work, and open such a window from heaven, that both you and I, and all that seek the Lord, may be thoroughly transformed to a hearty joy, even in divers temptations; and know the reason, through his grace, why the blessed Spirit did put that clause into the holy scriptures, for our patience and solid comfort, James i. 2. We are changeable, no rest here; and 'tis well it is so; that we might not relish any thing in this world so sweet, as to tempt away our hearts from lovely Canaan, and the desirable fellowship of Christ, face to face. Oh, the day yet hastens, I trust, in which we shall sing away heart-melancholy forever, etc.

1660. — To D. D.

WHATEVER hazards or difficulties you may fear, they are all under the compass of God's absolute disposal; and the same faith that carries us to rest on Him for one thing, in self-denying dependence, (which at this time God calls upon us, eminently and graciously to exercise,) the same faith (having such a God and Christ in its eye) is as extensive, and under promise of success in all things. "All things are possible to him that believeth," Mark ix. 23. As once Christ said, "Remember Lot's wife;" so I would say to you, Remember Lot himself: observe how infirmly he carried the matter, although his faith and obedience were stronger

than his wife's in the general; and being sincere was accepted: yet, although he saw the wonders of God before his face, and his irresistible power, in destroying those cities in that manner, and preserving him, as a father would preserve a child; he still feared to go to the mountain where God appointed him, lest he should perish. And when he was in Zoar, a town which God told him He would save for his sake; yet there also he was afraid, and departed thence, as if he had no longer an interest in the power of God to save him. And how sadly he fell when he thought he had secured himself in a cave, the story doth relate. And such like instances do the scriptures yield in the history of Jacob, David, and others. And because, after every exercise of faith, we are apt to enter into a cave, God doth hold out new matter for our exercise; as it were, to keep us in the open air, to make our faith hardy and warlike. God loves not to have his children creep about the fire-side, the refuge and sparks of their own kindling; but for their health's sake enures them to the weather, that they may be hardy in believing; according as the variety, and difficulty, and hazards do appear, and the imagination of such things start into the mind. Let us beg of God the practice of our own letters one to another, and we shall yet see the salvation of God in that kind as shall be best, even it may be to the outward man. He that can be contented to venture his estate, his safety, his credit, his soul, his labors, and the success of them, wholly upon God; and sit down, and sing a psalm to his Almighty mercy, goodness and truth; that man has got a castle over his head, let the wind blow which way it will. And herein the blessed God and giver of faith will not fail, any more than the truth of his nature, and the truth of his word, can change. I would fain be at the practice. However, I must so far commend the way of my God, and justify the method of his discipline, both to me and you; that the crown of our profession, and the glory of a Christian, lies in this life of believing.

I do experience so many obstructions against clear dependence upon, and resignation to, the safe hand of God's power and love, and so many aching, contradicting fits of flesh and blood, that it would, in some sense, grieve me to put any friend, that acts only in a carnal mind, upon such uncouth work as this is. But knowing that you have already started the game, I would have you pursue cheerfully to a

perfect surrender, and glorying in God. Believe it, as bad a place as you are in, God has made it, for a season, his school to you; and till God doth some way clear things by his providence, for your removal, expect more practical teaching, and more shelter under his wing, where you are, than elsewhere; although your company would be to me exceedingly desirable, etc.

1661. — *To D. H.*

I PERCEIVE my aunt hath had her weakness returned; such is the constitution of this clayey lump: but what a wonder is it, that a treasure of grace and eternal life should continue to dwell, through all the days of our sin, trouble, and vanity, in such a tabernacle; and that the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of grace, holiness, and glory, should never cease striving, in the midst of all that coarse entertainment of Him, and frequent opposition on our part, and never give over, till our sins be utterly and forever extinguished, and mortality swallowed up of life; and so these vile bodies and polluted souls made conformable to our Redeemer, and the eternal companions of his bosom. Let us fix our eye there, and we shall be always delighting in or doing something for Him; and never be discontented with our works, though we rid but little ground. Let us prize him, and love him, and all his rules and orders; himself in the first place, and all the rest for his sake only; and that will make our work our delight, not our toil and vexation; for there is no want of help, either for strength, or pardon, or both. He takes sinners to himself, that he may spend intimacy of good-will upon them; and never lets them go quite out of his hands any more. Oh, how little do we know Him! How little do we remember, that every conviction we have had, every groan, every desire of soul after him, was born first in his heart, and given to us, as the new creature's food, to ripen it for glory! We breathe towards him in the strength of his own breath. We may be yet much more winnowed, but cannot be lost, nor our strength quite fail; because He prays for us as never man did. His prayers cannot but speed; for the will of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is one will, for they are one God; and that will is nothing but good-will to us, who hope in Him, and take hold of his free covenant-good-will to men. I have very lately had news out of the north, that

my dear brother D. is departed out of this world. How should these things make us love to be trading for that country, where all our best friends go, and not think it much that this world yields so many sorrowful bits; because God never appointed it for our abiding place, but only that we may hear his voice, and be contracted to Him while we are below, in order to the consummating the marriage above. The Lord make us cheerfully serious in the business of our day, while it lasteth, that we may prepare to launch forth when our Lord shall call. Blessed are they who watch, etc.

1661.— *To D. A.*

WHAT God speaks in his word we may take for our comfort, to carry us through the mire, till we land beyond sin and pain. The salvation of such poor sinners as you and me, was and is the delight of the blessed Trinity. The Father did, in his grace and love, elect; the Son delighted to come and do the Father's will in redeeming; the Holy Spirit loves to apply it, and therefore is called the Comforter; the angels rejoice, that good-will from God is come to men. If God say, You must go to the top of the mount, and die, set your face towards him who has died before you, to bring you through. Flee to the mere grace and love of the glorious God, that has designed pardon and righteousness for poor sinners, for his own sake, in the person of his own Son. If he say, You must launch forth, roll upon the Rock of ages alone. The wearier you are of your sins, the more welcome to a Saviour. The wearier you are of your pains and burdens, the sweeter will be the bosom of an indulgent Father, when you arrive at your Father's house. The whole race of the residue of the redeemed are your fellow-travellers. The whole Trinity is on your side, the scriptures are on your side, and the eternal covenant of grace is on your side, while you bow your head, and lean only on your beloved Redeemer. Look up to him, and fear not your passage. I leave you to the arms of endless care, counsel, comfort, strength, and pity, etc.

1661.— *To D. H.*

OUR work in this world is only to follow after God, under all the changes and trials that accompany an earthly life:

and we have this encouragement ; “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Grace, and the exercise of it also, comes from God : None can cleanse a foul heart, or quicken a dead one, but he who raised your and my Redeemer from the dead. And therefore, if my heart be as hard as a stone, as foul as a dunghill, as weak as water, and as deceitful, treacherous, and vile as may be ; I have no refuge, but to flee to my most pure, holy Redeemer, to my unchangeable God in Jesus Christ, who is both my Judge and Saviour. He hears the inward panting of his own Spirit, when we can scarcely hear the voice of our own prayers, or scarcely know what to make of them. He, who creates light out of darkness, knows how to work up an acceptance of us to himself in Christ, when our persons and services, as they come from us, are as filthy rags in our own eyes. We never go down the wind, till we say in our hearts by unbelief, The covenant cannot stand in heaven, because I have sinned against it on earth. But what saith the Lord, “I am God, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Truly, sister, I find very often I have as much need of pardoning grace, as ever I had at first conversion. And I scarcely know anything that makes the difference betwixt me and the vilest hypocrites, but only this—that God makes my distempers my burden ; and, in the riches of his love, inclines my heart to hanker after him for help. And forever blessed be his name, that doth not suffer us to die away utterly from his relief. How great is his goodness ! How wealthy and endless is that store of perfection which is laid up in Christ for his ransomed and new-born seed ! Get Christ in your eye, and that will affect your heart, etc.

1661. — *To D. H.*

TOUCHING what you write, that you have an interest in the mercies I receive, it accords well with that word, 1 Cor. xii. 27, “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular thereof ;” and what a mutual interest is that ! First Christ’s, and then one another’s in him. Something of this affinity appears in the contentment of that mutual society of Christians, but more in the mutual faith in which they communicate with one another, Rom. i. 12. The streams are obvious to our sense ; but the streams would dry up, if the fountain did not feed them. The more you put on Jesus

Christ, the more doth the morning-star of perfection, in that and all other contentment, twinkle upon us. Still honor God, so as to lean upon him, and love him, and all the methods he takes. Nothing doth so much bring disquiet, as disappointment; and nothing doth so much bring disappointment, as the fixing one's expectations upon uncertainties. Be ever therefore trimming up your expectations on things above, where Christ is, and abides forever. Dissolve into his good will, and he will never disappoint your hope, nor suffer you to be at an utter loss. What think you is the very meaning of that place, Hab. iii. 17, 18, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom," etc., "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord?" etc. Doth it not speak out this? That God is the same, and his word the same, when all things fail besides. If I have disquiet or fears, let me inquire what it is that I fear, and on what ground; whether about my present or future state of body or soul? And let me not make questions or answers but what scripture doth countenance. I may make use of former experiences of my own or others, as they bear witness to divine writ, and so be thankful: but I must not make experiences of any sort my rule, nor the guide of my faith. My meaning is: We are apt to oppose something or other that we find, by observation or experience, against the word of the living God; or expound the great and faithful promises by those experiences or observations: as where it is said, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." "I will send you the Comforter, and he shall teach you all things." "I will satisfy the longing soul." "I will give you a new heart." "I will circumcise your hearts to love me." "The righteous shall not want any good thing." "Their souls shall not be desolate." "No evil shall come near them." "Your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more," and such like, which abound throughout the scriptures. We are apt to cast cold water, out of our experiences and observations, upon those promises, rather than kindle our faith at them, and so live by faith on them. We are apt to say, "Yes; but I do not find it so: I find sin prevail against me, my graces wither, my conscience clamors, my heart is hard; I pray, and have no answer; my condition is distressed, and I fear it will be worse: He that said, "No evil shall come near," doth yet suffer his people to be greatly distressed; even so far sometimes as to die under it, and therefore it is not directed to me; or there is

not such a sovereign good in it, as the gospel seems to proclaim." But I would say as Solomon did, Eccles. vii. 10, "Thou dost not consider wisely concerning this." It is impossible the oath and promise of God should fail; the mistake is on our part, not considering the work of the Lord, and the operation of his hands. He trieth, rooteth, and teacheth faith by ways of opposition; for Christ is always laboring in this vineyard: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," saith he. His great design is to reveal himself, and baptize his people into the spirit of his death and resurrection. He slays sin by suffering his people sometimes to be, in a sense, slain by it; that they may more fully die from their own power, into his life, Gal. ii. 19. He brings the soul to an utter strait, to make it look out, and venture upon him; as the four lepers, who, to flee from famine, ventured to flee to an enemy's army. When he would bring his people from sensible refuges, and from a man's personal worth, and inherent strength, (which usually gets in like rust upon the soul,) he dasheth all that, to teach us, that our life and every act of it is the mere operation of his grace, who lives, moves, and breathes in his people. How is it possible we should know patience but by sufferings; and the infinite power and truth of God in great deliverances, if the sun did always shine upon us? This made David say, "In very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me:" And Paul, "I will rejoice in mine infirmities, (or weaknesses,) that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Growth of grace lies chiefly in more and more expertness in owning of, and living nakedly on, the good that is in Christ, as being really mine own; and deriving good from him by perpetual motion. Man's life lies not so much in his breath, as in his breathing; so it is with spiritual life, which is maintained by exercising fresh and fresh acts of recourse to Jesus Christ: and, by this means, the soul comes at length to be (as it were) bathed in the comfort of his truth and love by an operating faith. Let my condition be what it will, inwardly or outwardly, I am not to be dismayed from running to God, and encouraging myself in him. But my work is, to be searching out what God re-proves or teaches thereby; holding this as an unmovable truth, that his love never fails from his people one moment; and his people are they, who in good earnest choose him for their God; whose very hearts fly out in fervent desires after him; such as come to God by Christ, who design that

as their aim. The whole scripture doth justify this plain difference between persons and persons; between those who come to the light, and those who hate it, John iii. 20, 21.

Now I say, my work is, never to let my heart question his love to me. If he has made me to hanker after him, and if he loves continually, then there is continually room for access to him. It is true, that he hath suffered his people sometimes to fall grievously, as David and others; and he hid his face upon it: but did we ever read, that he turned away from the prayer of the poor? and that, while it is nothing else but his own Spirit interceding in them, and Christ at the same time interceding for them? It is not imaginable. Though he seems not to answer sometimes, yet he loves their voice continually. Faith, or an acting out of our own life, in the life and Spirit of Christ, for all manner of good from God by him, is and was always a conquering successful grace. In the greatest surge it either gives contentment, or it hastens the opening of the door for deliverance; and usually both together, one way or other. It is a sad thing, that when we should be exercising faith for getting the good of an affliction, and prying after further discoveries of God's truth, love, and wisdom; and inquiring what the voice of our Father is, and what it means; I say, it is a sad thing, that, at that time, we should spend our thoughts in an unseasonable distrust of an interest in Him. His rod, his trials walk up and down among his people, to show he is their Father, and his discipline is amongst his children; and yet we are apt to take the very sign of our reconciliation, and make it an occasion of our distrust, that we are not related to him. This wisdom comes not from above, but is carnal, sensual, and unworthy of them who have heard the word of faith; and more so of them who have accepted it also for many years. It is bad tempting God, and vexing his Spirit in that which provoketh him most. But if I think I have not been related to him hitherto, let me flee to him in Christ now, and I shall be his, though I was not actually so before; for he casts away no sincere comer. But I do suppose you armed by the Lord to encounter these assaults, and am persuaded your faith will grow by every trial; yea, when it is most assaulted, you will be made to expect some good in the rear, which will make you glorify God even in the fires. Dear sister, I commend you to the Lord: Christ prays for you, and therefore your

faith cannot fail. He will be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame : He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold, etc.

1661.— To T. N.

IN pursuance of my promise, and also that the mutual remembrance of each other may be kept alive, I account myself engaged to present you these lines. It is one comfort, that the Lord rules the world ; yea, no other but *that* God to whom the supplications of his people are always acceptable in Jesus Christ ; and that nothing can be perfectly a misery to them who are constituted heirs of blessing, and past away from the curse through the cross of Christ. And though the glorious arm and truths of God seem to be overwhelmed in the world ; yet, when God shall appear to vindicate his name, and clothe himself with jealousy, what obstruction shall hinder his course, or stop his hand ? I know you are not only struggling with difficulties without, as well as I am, but with enemies within ; and truly that is my case also. And I know nothing that keeps me from being overwhelmed, but only this ; some blinks of the free, eternal, unchangeable bounty of God, who has, for his own sake only, pitched upon such an unworthy creature, and caused my soul to hanker after Him. When I am tired out with my own darkness, infirmity, pollution, and unbelief, his good Spirit is pleased sometimes to sway my heart, to throw myself, body and soul, and all my sins and cares, upon Him through Jesus Christ ; and so, out of my own shame and confusion of face, there darts in sometimes a beam of relief from Him who “ quickened the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as if they were.” Could we come off more smoothly to own and fix that hold upon Jesus Christ, which the word of God’s grace doth invite us to, we might launch forth, and venture securely in the ark Jesus Christ, when there is not a foot of dry ground here below to stand upon. When we cannot pray, then to remember Christ intercedes.—When we are all over defiled and confused, to remember the Mediator is clothed with our nature, and that, on our behalf, in perfect purity, and in the same nature which each of us doth bear.—That he did conquer all that we are as yet conflicting with in his name.—That we are esteemed, not according to our present infirmity, but according to that per-

fection to which we are entitled in him who is at God's right hand.—Could we be more exercised in this view and blessed prospect, it would make our dry and dead limbs recover heat and life; as it was with Jacob when he heard that Joseph was yet alive. Blessed be God! Joseph, our brother, is yet alive; and all power is committed into his hands: He has the keys of hell and death, and is himself the door of life also.

Oh, how unpersuadable are our hearts for the most part, and loath to credit the word of his grace and truth, so far as to resign up ourselves, our sins, our burdens of all sorts, to the virtue and power of his atonement and sovereignty, who has ended all differences, and brought in an everlasting righteousness and good-will, that a righteous God and sinful man might be reconciled together in Him, who has balanced the account exactly; and being gone, has left a legacy of blessing and peace to every soul that flees to him to feed upon him, till the days of full refreshing appear, and we see him as he is! When I only muse on my own weakness, it makes me more weak. While I converse with anxious thoughts, it makes my heart dark, sour, and feeble; but millions of sins, cares, fears, and disquiets, flee before one hearty closure with Christ, his power and grace, by faith. If Christ, in the soul, saith, "I am He," whole troops of adversaries fall backwards; difficulties vanish, and desponding, fleshly consultations of unbelief fly as dust before the wind: and that because our Redeemer is strong, though we are weak. I am ready to think sometimes, it is a pity that we should ordinarily (as we do) hear so much, and read so much, spoken or written to each other, of this certain, real refuge, and yet account it not more real. What a thing is this, that Christ hath engaged that not one of his shall be capable of losing what he hath purchased and bequeathed for them! Such a good-will, and free grace, as our sins shall never be able to sin away, any more than they can be able to sin away Christ from the right-hand of his Father; for were it otherwise, we were undone every moment! Who is it that maintains any thirst after him; that enables poor dust and ashes to conflict against all the powers of darkness; and of weak, sometimes to become strong? Who is it that maintains any indignation against the law of our flesh that is in our members, but he who hath overcome in his own person, and will shortly tread down Satan under our feet also, and is

hastening the day when the last enemy shall be destroyed, and every sigh and tear removed? Let us comfort our hearts in this, and pray for each other, that we may as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, fight this good fight of faith, laying hold on eternal life; and so surmount the miseries of the present evil world, etc. Pray present my hearty respects to your daughter, whose soul I know is laboring in this work, etc.

1661. — *To S. D.*

THE Lord is yours, if you are willing to be his; and I doubt not *that* is your desire and aim. Stand up in the midst of all your dumps and trials, and venture one hallelujah to him that rides upon the heavens for your help; yea, in the thickest of your doubts about soul and body, do but cast a wishful eye to him who hath swallowed up all manner of deaths in victory, and you shall overcome, and rise above the waves, because he is risen. It may be, you little think how it cheers the heart of Christ to see you sit down, and sing a psalm of praise for all his loving-kindnesses, in the midst of all worldly darkness. Measure not spiritual and eternal things by those that are for a moment. Do not wrong the wisdom of God your Father, by repining against the instruments and the events of his providence. Let your design be how to fortify each other's faith and joy, and never ask counsel of flesh and blood in the business. Read over the xlvi. Psalm, and make it yours by meditation and prayer. Dear sister, fare you well in the Lord. Hasten heavenwards, and count all things else but trifles, that you may finish your course with joy. Let the same mind be in you as was in Christ, who emptied himself to do the will of his Father, for saving such poor sinners as you and me; and when he might have enjoyed all the glory of the world, he refused it, and wandered up and down despised of men. Love the footsteps of the Captain of your salvation; and whenever any sinful disquiets boil up in your heart, carry your heart and your disquiets to the Lord, and beg of him to judge them, and give you the new heart he promised in Ezek. xxxvi. 26. The good-will, the heart-refreshing peace and comfort of a dear Father, a dear Redeemer, and the dear, blessed Spirit, be with you. Blessed he, blessed she, that overcomes; and blessed be the Son of God, who hath

undertaken that we shall overcome in his victory. Once more, farewell ; fear not, only believe.

1661. — *To B. D.*

I PERCEIVE your family is still visited. The God of the spirits of all flesh knows what scourges are most suitable for them whom he designs for glory, honor, and eternal life ; among whom, I trust, you and your yokefellow are enrolled. There is hope that good lies at the bottom, when the heart is drawn the more to seek, resign up to, and wait patiently for, the salvation of God, to a delightful thought of the appearance of Christ, and of your gathering to him : the whole world is not a purchase for one quarter of an hour's free access to God. If he draws and drives the heart to himself, let us bless and love him, whatever means he useth to bring it about. I desire to bless the Lord, that you are striving to trace the steps of that faith "that believed in hope against hope." Such faith, such hope, will never return ashamed. I am struggling with the same difficulties, and none can help me but the faithful Promiser ; who is able to quicken his word to me, and soften my heart to mix it with faith. As you write that he has not been a barren wilderness to you, (which is unspeakable grace,) so I have often found ; and therefore I have hope, that, at length, He will perfect the design of favor and pity upon such a poor worm. The Lord help you and me to find fountains in the valley of Baca, till the last surge be over, and every tear removed. We have no other way to communicate with each other, but in prayer and faith, affections, and letters. Letters, indeed, may miscarry, but no earthly obstructions can hinder the three former : faith and prayers fly invisibly, and Christian affections also. As for myself, the Lord is every day forcing my soul to look out more after the mysterious privilege of his most absolute free grace in Christ. There, the wearied find rest, the polluted find purity, and the dejected find an anchor of hope. Sometimes I am confounded in my own thoughts, and my prayers rather shame than comfort me ; then I stand still, and look for the salvation of God only : He sends his naked arm out of the thick cloud, and creates some beam of light and refuge, which makes a pilgrim sing in a land of darkness.

He seems to be gone sometimes, but returns again ; He withdraws, but never bids farewell utterly. He suffers me

sometimes to tumble in mine own filth, but brings me to the laver again; to the "Fountain opened to the house of David, for sin and uncleanness." His unchangeable purpose and grace holds its course as the sun; and therefore poor worms are never undone, though ever so low. Could I more actually resign to his will, and read that golden line of love which runs within every providence of his, and in every part of his discipline, and put my seal to it, how might I triumph and say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" He dasheth earthly comforts, that himself might comfort alone: He suffers corruption to swell and rage, that he may appear to be the only mighty Redeemer: He glorifies the excellency of his word, by forcing the soul thither for refuge. Brother, let us be flying into this ark; his word endures to a thousand generations. We have the same God, and no other than what Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, David, and Paul had. He never left a poor supplicant, nor will do it; for the Spirit of supplication is his own breath; and Himself deeply concerned in all the concernments of his people; they are his, and their concernments his also. Let us muse on this privilege seriously, and glorify his good-will by faith and thankfulness; and so rejoice in believing above hope. The Lord be a hiding place to you and me; never yield to let him go; but let us cling fast by faith and hope, till he cause salvation and light to shine forth out of obscurity, and comfort all that mourn. Glorify God by faith, patience, and thankfulness; lose not that, and you will be no loser: though the day be dark, the sun is not down. The times of refreshing will come to us, and we to them; for our Redeemer lives forever. I leave you to that God, and remain, etc.

1661. — 7% S. D.

THAT is the happiest man or woman in the world, that can truly hear the voice of God in his rod. That happy profit I press and long for: and that happiness I heartily wish to yourself and my brother; that as God hath made you partners in affliction, you may endeavor to the utmost to support each other's faith and holy patience in a stormy day. Afflictions, be they what they will, can never make you miserable. Nothing makes the rod tedious, but unwarrantable vexation of spirit: in days of trouble, that is

the usual temptation ; and there is no such cure as the naked sight of God's wise, disposing hand. If there have been any misgiving thoughts between you, about future concerns relating to yourselves and your children, (as under such surges you have met with, our frailty is very apt unto), spread that infirmity before the Lord, who is abundant in pardon, mercy, and truth ; who can spare the lives of the rest if he please, and will not suffer the seed of his servants to be desolate. All the scriptures are full of counsel, and infallible grounds of consolation ; yet such is our carnality, darkness, and unbelief, many times, that we think the rock cannot yield honey : and so we gauge things by fleshly and worldly observation ; and are apt secretly to condemn the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of God before we are aware ; whereas the only way to find the pearl of real advantage in the blessed word is, to lay the heart to the word by an exercise of faith ; and then cast the soul with full reliance upon the Lord, though it seems to be ever so much against that sense and reason, which flesh and blood is always dictating to us. Dear sister, I must confess I travail under a treacherous heart of mine own, which is ever betraying away my peace, my strength, my faith, and hope ; and that is my daily burden : but I never come before the Lord with any openness, and unfeigned resignation to him for pardon and succor in vain. I am somewhat a partner with you in the temptations and waves of a present world, but cannot call it dismal, so long as God doth in some measure steer my course in any sincerity after him. Let us provoke one another to this, and the storm will be over ; the day will break, and the darksome shadows will flee away ; or we shall flee through, or flee beyond them ; for faithful is he that hath promised.

1662. — *To D. H.*

TRULY, sister, I do sometimes wonder at the sottishness of my heart, that can be so affected with the christian respects of a dear friend, and yet have no more flames of affection to the Fountain of all love and loveliness. Methinks nothing makes any friend truly excellent in my thoughts, but grace, and the inhabitation of Christ there. And if a beam of his grace creates a delightful aspect wherever it pitches, how excellent for perfection is Jesus

Christ himself ! Sometimes our hearts are apt to fancy Christ, as if he were humorsome and revengeful, as if he would make the worst of things, and not the better : sometimes, as if he had forgotten, were far off, did not hear, were reserved, exceedingly ready to take exceptions, and such like ; whereas, we may go to a poor lump of clay, where a spark only of his nature dwells, and have sometimes a taste of that affection which is scarcely capable of reflecting back any such prejudices, or the least shadow of them. And the reason is, because there is a rooted persuasion of some predominant principle of christian, spiritual, and reciprocal love. O then, how seriously should we pray, that our hearts might be directed into the love of Christ ; and that it may be shed abroad in our hearts. A Christ that loves once, and ever ; yea, and to the full he loveth : he loved, and came ; he loved, and died ; he loved, and proclaimed the everlasting gospel ; he loves, and pardons ; he loves, and heals ; he loves, and corrects ; he loves, and teaches ; he loves, and reproves ; he loves, and holds fast forever ; he loves, and saves. When a soul is sunk as deep as hell in sin and filth, in love he redeems that soul, and is not ashamed, nor thinks it much, to cleanse it again, because love constrains him. All his ways, (not one excepted) are mercy and truth to them that fear him. He has a noble and surmounting love, not capable of melancholy, misconstruction, or mistake. He knew all the defects of his spouse before he betrothed her to himself in loving-kindness and tender mercies. And he so far abhors the declining of his love, that the very beholding of any defect there, inflames his heart to remove it, that he may present her to himself without spot. When we have any agony against our sins, doth this come from the flesh ? Is it not purely the Lord's arm ? What shall I say ? The Lord reveal himself, that we may purely rejoice in God our Maker ; and cling to him in the virtue and power of his own unsearchable and endless grace and love. I long for other society than I can have here ; few friends here, and little help ; especially as to that interest in which you and I are most concerned ; but there is a river that never dries up, and a counsellor that never fails. I am yet in health, and as to outward freedom, as I was when I came hither first ; but not without some daily exercises ; but my chief adversary lurks within, which God will one day destroy, and all warfare will be over. Let us pray to Him for each other, for it is not in vain.

1662.— *To T. N.*

DEAR SIR: However it goes with you, I trust you have no reason to count yourself alone, whilst so good a friend hath said, "I will be with you in the fire, and in the water." When we are in any deep affliction, then is a time to exercise scripture reason, and not worldly reason; and to draw such conclusions in reference to soul and body, as the wisdom and truth of God do teach. The Lord make his furnace to be purifying at this day. Some in one kind, some in another, have their various trials, but the "Father of mercies" doth govern the matter; so that, at the close, it shall be well with the righteous. Let us labor with might and main to keep up good thoughts of God, and the glory of our interest in him. Though the heavens and earth do shake, the sense of his covenant cannot change; his Son cannot be dethroned; nor the promises of his grace and presence be destroyed. Clouds may darken the sun as to us, but they can never diminish the natural light of the sun, nor stop its course. The sun is as nigh the earth when clouds interpose, as it was before; and our dear Lord is now as near his afflicted ones, as when the branch of earthly things was never so green in their hands. Faith, repentance, and love to the Lord Jesus, are glorious ornaments for a pilgrim travelling towards that city that hath foundations. Sir, I know not how in particular it fares with you, but I doubt not that it goes well: for can any dealings of an infinitely wise God, a faithful and gracious father, be amiss; seeing he has promised, and will not fail to "give, grace and glory, and will withhold no good thing from them that fear him?" Let us not deny his truth by unbelief, nor his love by a lowring despondency of heart: however the waves rise and swell, he is above them; and the great redemption is near.

1662.— *To B. D.*

I AM affected with your trouble, and yet comforted in your faith and comfort. But he who makes rivers run in the desert, knows how to refresh the dry ground. When we hear the news that our troubles will one day expire, there is some refreshment with it, and not a little support the while. But oh, forever blessed be that glorious hope,

that not only outward troubles, but sin also shall be no more; yea, and that, while we are striving and toiling under a body of sin, we are yet, in the second Adam, brought over from a state of sin, to a present state of righteousness, acceptance, and blessing. This is the crown and conquest of faith, hope, and consolation. "All these things will I give," said the tempter; yes, but upon what terms? "if thou wilt fall down, and worship me." Ah, cursed and deceitful proffer! Let my portion and yours be found still, and forever, in a crucified and risen Christ. If he loved us when he washed us in his blood, then no slaying providences can separate from the same love: so that we may, musing the matter aright, say, 'He loved me, when he hurried me hither and thither, when he brake my bones, emptied me from vessel to vessel, and made me as the mire of the street.' Yes, his blessing once bequeathed can never be revoked, nor his eternal love change. Though his paths are in the deep, and his ways and judgments past finding out, while he maintains in our souls a cry after him (which is the voice of his own Spirit interceding in us) he hath not forgotten to be gracious, nor caused his bowels to cease from yearning towards us. Sin only makes outward burdens intolerable; outward troubles declare the venom of sin, and tend to open the ear to instruction: and so both of them send the souls of the redeemed to the atonement of Christ's blood for healing, and into his bosom for refuge. Certainly, brother, his promises are as good now, as they were before the storm rose upon us; and the covenant of grace and love and good-will smiles as much as ever; and when the cloud is blown over and gone, we shall see it. Now, to justify God's truth, and submit to his wise hand; to maintain good and honorable thoughts of him, and all his dealings, when so many things from without, and also from within, do war against it; this is like the faith of God's elect, and doth, in some blessed measure, betoken the knowledge of what God is in himself, and what he is eternally to us, and that the seed of God remaineth in us. I leave you in his hand, and to strive under your affairs, as he shall give you wisdom and strength. Lord, purge and heal us: He will do it, and all will be well. Let us hold on to pray for each other, for "the vision will speak," etc., Hab. ii. 3, 4. Yours to love and live with you in the Lord, etc.

1662. — *To P. D.*

I HAVE no other thing to recommend to you but this; that as you have already found this present world to be a slippery foundation, so beware how you lay the whole stress of your expectation upon it, or the persons in it. A thirsty man may dream that he drinketh; yet when he awakes, he may faint. The drink of a dream gives not refreshment; it is only the water of life, issuing from the rock Christ, that is satisfying and healing; "He that drinks of that water shall never thirst." Frowns and favors of men are some of the strongest engines the devil has, to shake a soul from simple and single-hearted following of the Lamb; and besides them, the treachery of our carnal and unbelieving hearts is ever watching to betray our poor souls into a disrelish of the pure paths of life; dulling the edge of zeal, and blinding the eye from beholding the excellency that lies in the person of Christ crucified and risen, and the excellent grace that has shone from heaven for recovering poor sinners out of the snare of the devil. So that you and I have need to be much attending at the footstool of that throne, where the Lord of life sways the sceptre of relief, mercy, and saving health for all comers. Let my portion be in the fountain of life, and not in the broken cisterns of earthly, deceitful contentments. If you would save yourself from grieving the good Spirit of God, (which, I trust, dwells in you,) retire yourself, as much as you can, into the contemplation of such things as may cause the fear and love of God to be and remain, with some odoriferous verdure and kindly growth in your soul; and take an ingenuous and serious view, whether the plants of the Lord do flourish, or else are blighted. No less than an infinity of power is requisite to such work; and he only, who engageth his heart to it, lieth under the promise of the influences of Heaven, to quicken and satisfy him with good things full of marrow. I have no more, but to recommend you to the Lord, to keep you from declining in a declining time; and that you may be preserved from evil, and your affections be where Christ is. I remain, etc.

1662. — *To S. H.*

I KNOW you yearn after the same country, which I have some hope (through the riches of that bounty that has ap-

peared from heaven to men) to see; and when the groans here below are over, to breathe forth blessing, honor, and praise to Him, who, I trust, has loved us both, and washed us in his own blood; and I have some ground to hope the number there will be one the more for your company. Only spend your love upon him, your delight in him, your desires after him, and every part of his will; as well to carry the cross, as to wear the crown, for both are privileges.

When your heart is oppressed with sin or trouble, then think, oh, how free is He from sin, who sits conqueror at the right hand of God, as my Advocate, Surety, and Redeemer; yea, my principal self; whose I am by his redemption, more than I am mine own! Sins, evil thoughts, heart-lusts, and despondency of spirit, shall not always tear and torment; for he has judged them in his flesh upon the tree, and is risen on our behalf. I could write a volume, had I words and time, of the terrible inroads which the enemy, especially my own corrupt heart, makes upon me; but I doubt not, you know the same warfare. What remains, but that with faith, hope, and patience, we cry out, "How long, Lord, holy and true, how long ere the Canaanite be expelled, and these thorns in our flesh be consumed forever?" Oh, what pure and uninterrupted communion with Christ will that be, when neither sin within, nor troubles and fears without, shall gall any more! when melancholy doubts and unbelief, as a black cloud, shall be dispelled, and dried up forever before the sparkling face of the Sun of righteousness, solemnizing the marriage of his spouse! We have no oratory that can out-pass what he has already uttered concerning this; and his words are not vain, though ours are many times too, too chaffy about these things, the more is the pity it should be so. When he says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; I will circumcise your hearts to love me: I will redeem Jacob out of all his troubles: I will be with you, and deliver you," his words are all true; but our little exercise of faith is either like a weak-handed grasp, or a leaky vessel; yet our faith itself is in his keeping, and his intercession is incessant; therefore it cannot utterly fail. Dear sister, wait on him, pluck up your soul to the business; your labor will not be in vain, nor shall any unfeigned desire after him return disappointed and ashamed. Throw husband, child, and self upon him, into his bosom; and there lodge together by faith,

in the joy of the Holy Ghost, and so take your rest: I mean a laborious, and yet a sweet rest; for so he giveth his beloved sleep. His own concerns are mixed in ours; though his own are chief in his eye, yet he can look upon them, without overlooking ours; for the covenant is made; the blood that concerns it is already shed, and fully accepted; the redemption is complete; and the Lord's portion and delight is his people. So that he, as it were (if I may say as it were, in so true and real a business,) raiseth in himself an endless delight, by loving his ransomed seed, dressing them according to his own heart, and shedding a measure of that love into their hearts also, for carrying on a spirit of conjugal affection in the souls of his people towards him now: till the shadows flee away, and we come to know him as we are known of him; and so love him without interruption, as we are loved of him. The day is near, when a thousand-fold more of this will really appear than words can utter: for who can speak how much there lies in God's purpose, yea, in his very heart, to do for them whom he bought so dear, and rescued with so high a hand? Deut. x. 15. How then should we look out to awaken our faith, and lift up our heads, because our Redeemer is alive and risen, and our safety is in him! Oh, that my own heart and yours were more warmed with such a view! I have no more, but to recommend you to the bosom of him who is the God of all grace, pity, power, and consolation. Yours, in the hope of this saving health and relief, etc.

1663. — To D. H.

I HAVE not yet found out a way of employment; but am looking out, and do desire to be looking up; for my advice and "help cometh from the hills," as David speaks. Disappointments (as a wise and faithful God orders them) are as useful many times as success. God has not cast me out of his gracious covenant, nor my soul into murmuring discouragement; but tells me, the trial of my faith is better, much better than gold. However it is with my outward man, yet my chief want is not there; and although my sinful and corrupt heart wars strongly against the Spirit and the new creature, yet I believe the Spirit, in the operations of his grace in the new creature, will carry the day, when all is done, for our Redeemer is strong. I am laden with dark-

ness, weakness, corrupt lusts, vanity, distrust, unsteady and uneven walking, deadness and hardness of heart ; but I find the fountain of mercy for cleansing still open, and the grace, mercy, and truth of God in the covenant unchangeable : and in this stands “ all my salvation, and all my desire,” 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. I want nothing but more faith, more spiritual light and furniture, more of Christ’s image, more renewing in the spirit of my mind, to have less carnal carefulness, Luke xii. 22, and more of the just man’s life, Habbak. ii. 4. Sin makes a man poor, weak, and fearful ; the grace of God, which brings salvation, makes a soul rich, strong, and confident ! for the covenant of grace, and the promises, are more than words. The treasure is full ; and if I could bring my empty sack in earnest, it would be filled in earnest. I give you a short hint of my conviction, my conditions, travails, and desires : that, in the like, you may see you are not alone, and that we may strive together in spirit towards the glorious prize of our high calling. I commend you to your and my strong rock, the blessed and ever-living God, etc.

1664. — *To B. D.*

I DO not doubt but the same God, who has made communion with himself sweet to you, will gather you under his wings, and perfect in you the good pleasure of his will. What a majestic privilege is this, that the omnipotent God should voluntarily be in the nearest covenant relation with a poor sinner ! That Christ, God-man, should be our Priest, our Advocate, and every hour of the day and night alive, to make intercession for all those who come to God through him ! What though great and new temptations come, and sore tempests arise, he did, and doth, say to the storms, “ Be still,” and they must all obey him. Strong is our Redeemer, and therefore the floods cannot drown a weather-beaten vessel ; yea, he is both ship and pilot, and therefore the venture cannot miscarry. Who is it that keeps the small grain, the little spark of faith, alive, but he who made Jonah, in the deep, to say, “ Yet I will look again towards thy holy temple ? ” Our whole care and burden lie upon his hands, “ who bears up the pillars of the earth.” He lives to give and nourish faith, and in believing to give peace : therefore sin shall not have utter dominion, nor condemnation find room to enter. He is bringing us through many waters to

a safe shore. The victory determined and promised will break forth, because our Head is exalted above all authority and power. We may look all manner of deaths and discouragements, all manner of disappointments and difficulties here below, in the face, without an appalled heart, and amazing terror; because the Prince of life and deliverance has engaged his life, his crown, and dignity, to be the hope and strength of his poor servants. Happy is that soul that makes him his only and continual refuge, as I perceive you do; and blessed be his name for it! Mr. Th. Tr. is dead; and thus rolls away the world, and the things and lusts thereof. The days of an anxious pilgrimage are running out. The Lord direct our eyes to that serene and unchangeable state, where sins, fears, and temptations, turmoils and difficulties, will cease forever: to the comfort and communion of whose gracious Spirit I commend you.

1665.— To B. J. D.

I DO, by one or other, sometimes hear of your health, which is welcome news to me. Although the years of my life have not reached the number that yours are now at; yet, methinks, the Lord hath given me a fair respite to seek that pearl which doth surmount the value of the whole world and the lusts thereof, which pass away: but the deceit, pollution, and negligence of my own heart are such, and so unsuitable has been my improvement of time in a day of grace, under the means thereof, that I may cry out, Where have I been? what have I done all this while? how little have I answered the gospel call! how little have I pried applyingly into the mystery of Christ! and what miserable returns have I made to all the bounteous offers of the gospel that I have read and heard! But yet the Lord hath, in some measure, hinted to my soul, that he has made with me in Christ an everlasting covenant. There I desire humbly to cling, and there to place all my expectation, my hope of acceptance and salvation, and all my desire. And you that have seen more days than I have done, I entreat you also to give them a serious review. Let neither of us leave our choicest concernments at uncertainties. Oh, for a rousing visit from the God of all grace upon each of our hearts, that may alarm us out of ourselves into the city of refuge, before we are benighted! Let each of us be as much afraid to

have any wholesome conviction die upon us now, as we would be afraid hereafter to be found without our wedding garment. I have little news, but that the plague is greatly increased, and seems to import that wrath has gone forth. The Lord help us to put our house (our hearts) in order, with the utmost zeal and diligence. The alarm from heaven sounds louder and louder, and seems to give more than an uncertain sound. It speaks out Divine wrath most distinctly: happy would this city and land be, if they heard and submitted to the voice of the rod. Let us look out, and be fitted to meet our Lord. It is a pity to let an eternal state be at uncertainties with us, when a temporal life is thus tottering. Such a fleeing to Christ as is accompanied with a clear resignation of our wills wholly to his will, is the best preparative for our change.

1665. — To B. J. D.

THOUGH there is not often intercourse betwixt us by letters, yet I can truly say, you are many times upon my heart. The affairs of your precious and never-dying soul are the principal theme of my anxious and affectionate remembrance of you. I have you in my eye when I do not bodily see you, and in my prayers to Him who quickeneth all things, and giveth life and growth to whomsoever he will. Your convictions, your temptations inward and outward, the wiles and power of the prince of darkness, who stands against you in battle-array, your infirmity, the deceitfulness of sin, (that will turn and wind and shift from one corner of the soul to the other to preserve itself from being dislodged) the lulling baits, the powerful suaves, the threats, exigencies, and influences of a present evil world, the difficulty, and yet the necessity of that spiritual warfare to which you are called, and unto which the promise of victory is made: these things, I say, are in my eye. And then I think, here is matter enough for one brother to remember another, and to cry out, "O Lord, who shall raise my brother into a vigorous exercise of faith with power, into inward and exemplary holiness? Who shall bring him into the rivers of effectual contrition, and land him on the right shore; for he is feeble, unable, and ready to halt in the way? Who shall bring him into the strong city, the walls whereof are salvation, and the habitation thereof purity, serenity, and peace? Wilt not

thou, O God, who alone canst slay the crooked serpent, and say to all obstacles whatsoever, Give way ; let the ransomed of the Lord return : let the seed of my servants, to whom my promise is made, come and enter into the strong hold ; for I have found a ransom ? ” Dear brother, how and in what frame of heart my letter will find you, I know not ; but God has guided my pen to let you know a little what kind of musings I have, in my jealousy and tender affection towards you. If you are busied in these things already, these lines may be a spur and encouragement : if otherwise, God can make them a successful alarm ; though, as mine, they are weak, short, and impotent. I live here among the graves, and do not know but that my decease may be at hand, though at present in good health ; and therefore I think meet to let my arrow fly, as near as I can, to the white of the mark ; for there is no work nor invention in the grave ; no return from thence, nor further opportunity to set the house (the heart) in order. Though my bow may be drawn at random, God can direct the arrow within the joints of the armor : to him I commend it and you. I have sent you a bill of mortality. The voice of God crieth to the city, to the country, to you, and to me : the man of wisdom, and none else, shall see, and fear his name.

1665.— *To E. D.*

THE greatest thing I desire is, that the presence and blessing of the Lord may be mine and your portion ; and that is the best portion which is obtained from Him by prayer and resignation to his pure will. How, in reference to me, God has ordered the things of this world to come and go, you have in some measure seen, that you with me should lay hold upon the most durable substance ; that so we may become heirs of that peace and that treasure, which the world is neither able to give nor take away. Upon such a bottom as that, and no other, there is safe swimming by faith through all changes and difficulties, unto a condition of rest, purity, peace, and satisfaction that will never change. I hope Christ has numbered you amongst his lambs ; and if God himself be to you and me a Shepherd, we may, in the words of his own Spirit, say, We shall want no good thing. Therefore call much upon him, to reveal himself in his Son unto your heart, and that he would carry and mould your

concernments and mine in his own bosom, take the whole care and guidance of us into his own hands, and also conform us perfectly to his will ; and then we are beyond hazard, and may be assured to be supplied sufficiently ; be guided by his grace here, and arrive at glory hereafter.

1668. — *To C. E. D.*

I APPREHEND it a providential favor of God to me, that He gave me an opportunity of seeing my dear cousin, your husband, before the Lord removed him hence ; that I might have some fresh taste of the frame of his soul, when he stood upon the brink of eternity, ready to launch forth. I know it is an afflicting providence to you, to be deprived of the society of so dear a relation, after you had so long enjoyed the endearment of each other's affections, and had passed through many afflicting dispensations together in this vale of trouble ; and had also, I doubt not, many joint applications to God, praying together, and, according to the ability which God gave, endeavoring to promote each other's spiritual and everlasting welfare. But herein there is matter of consolation, and thankfulness to God ; not only that He lent you this choice comfort through so many years of pilgrimage, but that He caused you to see his faithfulness and goodness in carrying this your dear husband through, to the end of his spiritual warfare ; and that God preserved him from staining his profession in the eyes of the world, and has rendered the remembrance of him precious amongst his people, and fulfilled his word touching him, "Mark the righteous man, and behold the upright ;" etc. And though he be taken out of our sight for a little time, there is no reason to repine, that the Lord hath seen it good to take him into the vision and perfect fruition of himself among the blessed, (as he hath given us ground to be fully persuaded,) and has now put an end to his troubles and disquiets, has healed his aches, cured his diseases, and removed his pains of body ; translating him from this world, where He is yet pleased to leave you, for a further exercise of your faith and patience. And now what remains, but that you gird up the loins of your mind, to run the remainder of your own race ? And while you are here, in time, breathe after the same eternal rest ; rejoicing amidst all trials, and believing that our faithful and gracious God, who has begun

his good work in your heart, will never cease till He hath carried you through, and landed you safe, beyond all temptation, sin, and sorrow. Unto the hands of this gracious God I commend you, etc.

1668. — *To E. D.*

SINCE my former, God has been pleased to draw a cloud over my poor family. Tuesday last, little Tommy fell sick, and on Wednesday morning died, and is this day to be buried. A great and sudden stroke, which doth almost overwhelm my dear wife; who goes up and down lamenting, and often crying out, That she has sinned away her sweet babe into the grave. You may see, in short, how it is with us at present; I need not add more; for I know what tender love yourself did bear to this sweet and heart-taking infant. Only I desire both you and my dear sister, and our friends there, to pray for us, that this stroke may be blest to us all, and that my desolate, dear wife may be guided through her present confusion of spirit, to the only and right refuge. I delivered her your letter, which was very acceptable; and therefore pray write her something again; and I desire my sister would do the same: it is good to help in time of need. Her heart is much broken, and my affliction is not a little one: I believe it is for some further good that God intends to us both. A few lines from you, whom I know she doth dearly value, will be very seasonable. No affliction is at present joyous, but grievous; but afterwards comes the sweet and wholesome fruit: and this is the portion of them who take hold of the full and sure covenant, and the crucified, risen Christ, who dies no more. There is nothing will so wean affections hence, and from the mischief of creature-love, as the study of Christ; viewing him in the gospel, pondering his excellent person, and his glorious mediatory office for us; and so set the affections on him, as to be inflamed with his love, under a view of our own right to and interest in him. And therefore, not only with the bowels of an earthly father, but in the bowels of Jesus Christ, I intreat, and in his name do charge you, to study and muse day and night, the unmeasurable, endless love of God, who sent his Son; the infinite, unwearied, and endless love of Christ, who came, died, rose again, and lives forever, to be your only portion; and to make you, even you, a delightful por-

tion to him; and to render you (through the blood of sprinkling, and the communion and influence of that one Spirit of the Father and Son) an object of his delight, and a monument of his pardoning grace, and his purifying virtue, to all eternity. To him I commend you.

1668. — *To E. D.*

BOTH myself and my wife are very sensible of this sore storm with which the Lord is pleased to exercise your faith and patience at this time. But Christ is in the vessel, and therefore you cannot perish: in the fire and in the water, in every cold and hot fit, he is with you, and has a tender sense of every jot of your pain and sickness. It is a father's chastisement and trial: and all his aim is, to purify and fit you for an object of his eternal delight. I know his everlasting arms are under you; and though the dispensation be dark, yet he is doing you good with all his heart, according to his covenant, and with all his soul. He inclined your heart, of his own grace, to choose him, because he first chose you, and will yet choose you in the furnace. Throw yourself upon him; for nothing shall separate you from his love in Christ. Christ himself was once sick, for your sake, to the very death, and in great darkness; yet always beloved of his Father: and his God and Father, is your God and Father; and therefore he will not forsake your soul in adversity, but make your bed in your sickness; for his tender mercy toward you can never dry up. Resign yourself wholly to Him, and be comforted in Him; for He who is your own God and Saviour, is Lord both of life and death. My heart is melting over you, and yet I am but an earthly father; all affection is derived from Him; but his affections, his love and pity are infinite. I do remember you, and my poor wife also; both of us have and do spread your case before the Lord; and I have abundant satisfaction in the Lord, that it is and will be well with you, living or dying; but we earnestly desire, if it be his will, that you may yet live to show forth the praises of Him upon the earth, who has done great things for you. For what greater favor can He give a poor creature, than to make you seek his face, and to number you amongst his followers; which He has given evidence of (blessed be his name) already. Be not dejected, but lift up your head and heart to your God and Saviour;

throw all your sins, and cares, and fears upon him, and spare not; for so you honor him, and can never please him better. He sees you through a cloud, and delights to do you good; and will never cease, till he open before you the endless volume of his eternal love, and so love you into his eternal rest. Therefore bear up, and be revived; for God himself is with you for a refuge. To him I leave you, waiting his good pleasure, etc.

1668.— *To E. D.*

I RECEIVED yours of the 10th instant, October, desiring to own the gracious hand of God in this speedy recovery of yours. When Hezekiah was reprieved from death for a season, it is said, he rendered not according to the benefit; take heed of that: whatever awakening you have had, endeavor to retain it; and that is the best kind of thankfulness; and this the Lord will give, if you often let him know that it is the real desire of your heart: He satisfieth the longing soul. Present the same things to him, by faith and prayer, which you mention to me in your letter, and then you may expect to speed. He can compose and direct your thoughts; for heart-work is his only to manage. When you put faith and prayer to the word, you make it another thing than it was before in the mere letter; that is the way to draw water out of the wells of salvation. And thus humbly, seriously, and cheerfully expect whatever good there lies bequeathed to you in the New Testament, which is your legacy, etc.

1669.— *To D. H.*

I AM refreshed in the experience you have had of the good hand of God towards you; and though God has caused you to walk in many rough paths, as to your outward condition, yet he still appears a God of all grace; and doth, in these things, plainly tell you, that this world is not your rest; and therefore you meet with thorns and briers here, that you may have the fresher desires maintained in your heart, aspiring upwards. The greatest of earthly contentments will be of no worth nor use in heaven; neither can they of themselves, any way add to the comfort or thriving of a spiritual life on earth. The only life we are allowed to live in this

world is the life of faith ; which grows better under difficulties, than in a smooth state of affairs in this world. I know no sweeter entertainment God has to give in this world to his poor children, than that he give often convincement, that the best of this world is too lean diet for them to feed upon ; and so make them take the truer taste of that marrow and fatness which, in Christ, they are always to live upon ; that is, no less than God himself, the fountain of blessedness, safety, peace, sufficiency, and solid joy.

What can come amiss to that soul, which Christ undertakes, by all things, and through all things, to bring to himself ? For this end he died : this is the great end of every trial you meet with ; and upon this ground the Spirit saith, Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. All the glory, fulness, and ease of this world is but horror and distress to a convinced soul, that looks on God as an enemy : but nothing can be dismayingly sad, when God saith, I am thine ; when the Infinite saith, 'I am thine ; I, who am the Maker of all things, am thy husband ; thy trials shall not quite overwhelm thee ; thy sins shall not ruin thee ; death itself shall not destroy thee.' O death, where is thy destruction, when God shall say, 'I will be with thee in the fire, and in the water ; thy person is accepted, thy prayers (though in thine own eyes without any form or comeliness) are sweet, and accepted in Christ, who hath chosen thee, and thou hast chosen him ?' What shall I say ? The freeness of God's grace in Christ, his powerful and most voluntary love is such, wherever it darts, that neither sin nor devil can stand before it, to hinder a jot of all that good which such a God has promised and undertaken to perform, (and that merely upon the account of his own name) streaming forth through Christ in the gospel, to such poor, ill-deserving creatures as you and I are. I shall add no more at present, except committing you to this God, whose you are, whom you serve, and who will never leave nor forsake, but guide you by his counsel, and support you by his Spirit, till he has brought you to glory, the perfection and fulness of what you pray and long for.

1670. — 7th M. D.

EVERY day here is tedious to me, only I am now and then refreshed among savory acquaintance. I have had

some difficulties in my own spirit under the present dispensation ; but God has given some hints to me, that it shall be for advantage. Some clouds have come, but ever and anon it shines again ; which shews, that though darkness be intermixed, yet the sun is not set, nor day utterly gone ; nor will ever cease till the present warfare issues in freedom and victory ; and all through the rich grace and faithfulness of God, who “delighteth in mercy,” who will “abundantly pardon and save to the uttermost.” I have you often in my eye, and the rest of my dear friends, to whom I am related in the fellowship of the gospel ; for all of whom I offer up daily requests to our God and Father. Let us pray, believe, hope, and rejoice in our God, our rock. “He giveth power to the faint, will revive the weary, and never turn from them who wait on him, to do them good.” Oh, that whenever we meet again, it may be with some advanced degrees of holiness, and spiritual light and life : more faithful, more capacious to take in the mystery of Christ, more discerning our union with him, more inward in our communion, more often in our converse with him ; that we may spring upwards with more frequent desires, and improve the grace of adoption in a greater height of filial obedience ; and with more freedom, resolvedness, and delight, make Christ our all in all. Surely God aims at this in our trials, and the trials of his church, and I trust “the zeal of the Lord of hosts will effect and perform it.” I know my affairs at home suffer by my absence, but God knows how to balance that loss ; and therefore, while I am serving his present providence, I desire to leave that care upon him. I commend you to the gracious bosom of our blessed God and Father ; even to him who is your best friend and keeper ; and with my choicest affections I remain, etc.

1670. — *To P. D.*

THE best advice, which, in the first place, I would give you (and which I would take myself) in all straits, is seriously to consider the deserving cause of trouble, and how far there hath been in you the least accessoriness thereunto, and so to spread it penitently before the Lord, imploring the help of his Spirit through Jesus Christ, to give your soul a thorough turn to him ; applying yourself heartily and unfeignedly to the throne of grace, for the removing away all

guilt; and that your conscience being cleansed through the blood of Christ, peace may be made between God and your soul. And if the Lord shall please thus to incline your heart to him, it will be some forerunning token, that he will find a way (for he can best do it) to take off the edge of men's severity, and turn it, though against the grain of their own interest, into pity and kindness, etc.

1672.— *To B. J. D.*

I AM glad to hear that you are in health, which the Lord continue, with the addition of the highest blessing, that spiritual endowment, and that interest in Christ, that saving and powerful work of grace, and that activity for God in the ways and power of godliness, and that exemplary pattern of holiness in your walk, which can only render long life a blessing, and truly make an hour of dissolution sweet, and the consideration of that great day of our appearance to be pleasant, and, upon safe grounds, desirable. That famous and laborious minister, Mr. Joseph Caryl, your ancient friend and companion, is departed this life, aged about seventy-one years; his death is greatly lamented by the people of God throughout this city. About the beginning of his sickness I was with him, and he inquired concerning you, and perceiving him to be somewhat weak, though he did not then keep his chamber, I desired him, while he was yet alive, to continue to pray for you; which motion he cheerfully and readily embraced. And coming to him again, about three days before his death, I found him very weak, and past hope of life; he then told me, as well as I could understand him, (for his speech was low,) that he had remembered his promise to me concerning you. I think good to mention this particular passage, to provoke you to all seriousness in reference to your own soul, whose eternal welfare lay so much upon the heart of this servant of Christ. His labors were great, his studies incessant, his conversation unspotted, his sincerity, faith, zeal, and wisdom, gave a fragrant smell among the churches and servants of Christ. His sickness, though painful, was borne with patience, and joy in believing; and so he parted from time to eternity, under full sail of desire, and joy in the Holy Spirit. He lived his own sermons: he did at last desire his friends to forbear speaking to him, that so he might retire within himself; which times, they perceived, he spent

in prayer; oftentimes lifting up his hands a little; and at length his friends, seeing not his hand to move, drew near, and perceived he was silently departed from them, leaving many mournful hearts behind.

And now, dear brother, O that this may be an exciting motive to you and me, to redeem the time which the caterpillars have eaten, that we be not found unready. And if ever you expect to be a companion again with Mr. Caryl, break off from all such company which were not his delight. Concern yourself to make a fresh and thorough surrender to God in your old age. Beg, I beseech you, beg such a convincing, impartial, heart-breaking sight of your sins in youth and old age, that may force you to Christ for refuge, while he may be found; and beg his Spirit, that you may glorify him on earth, the few days that yet remain, as signally as ever you have dishonored him. What a joy will it be to this glorified saint, Mr. Caryl, at the last day, to see that his prayers for you have prevailed! Dear brother, I pray excuse my earnestness in what I have written; it may be, you and I may never again see each other in this world: you are much upon my heart, I mean as to your eternal estate; and glad I should be to hear of some eminent change as to soul-concernments, before either I hear of your, or you hear of my, launching forth into vast eternity, where there can be no more changes; and the hour is near, in which the eye that hath seen you shall see you no more: "As the tree falls, so shall it lie:" the eternal judgment follows death at the heels. I can say no more: it must be divine power and grace that must set the wheels a-going, if ever they move. And therefore, whilst I am in this world, I hope I shall not cease to pray for you, whilst you are in this world also; for our prayers cannot reach beyond the grave. Dear brother, farewell; yea, fare better and better, till you fare best of all, etc.

1674.— *To B. D.*

I BLESS the Lord, I can remember and mention you as one who is interested in that promise, Jer. xxxii. 41, "I will rejoice over them, to do them good;" and that he will never leave you, till he has perfected that which concerns you, in a way of grace, mercy, and love. My great and frequent request on your behalf is, above all, that God would pre-

serve you from the evil of sin, and from snares in your daily walk; that he would sprinkle you with the blood, with the merit, of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness; that he would direct your path, and do all your works in you, and for you; and cause you to lean strongly and cheerfully on the arm of his truth and grace, in reference to all present and future trials; and that you may more than conquer through believing, in every exigence you do or may meet with; till the warfare be accomplished, and the days of trial terminate in the fruition of perfect freedom. For my own part, I have reason to bless the Lord, that he has favorably held me up, and carried me along now these many years, since we saw each other; and although he hath exercised me with some difficulties, and considerable losses, yet I hope and do think, he has some way or other a reserve of kindness for me (unworthy me and mine); "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." And through this grace, I have, in some measure and desire, held on still to choose him for my portion, as to things present and eternal. Your time and mine are in the hands of God, who is most wise, and to be adored and submitted to. The days of our anxious pilgrimage are running out; the Lord direct our eyes to that serene, unchangeable state, where sins, fears, temptations, turmoils, and difficulties, will cease forever: to the care, counsel, comfort, and communion of whose gracious Spirit I commend you.

1674. — To H. W.

REMEMBERING that ancient amity and respect, that was heretofore between my father and yourself, and the continuance thereof, for a long time after his decease, between yourself and his family; and being not at all conscious to myself, that I have, for my own part, hitherto merited, much less designed the suspense of that good will; but being still heartily desirous of your welfare, I am, though distant in place, yet, as occasion presents, often inquiring how it is with you; and understanding that your days are yet drawn forth, and that your pilgrimage, though under much infirmity of old age, doth yet continue, I was willing to evidence my real respects unto you by a line or two: and as I do not doubt, but that your general aim, throughout your days, has been to employ your talents in the service of Christ, while strength

and time permitted ; so I earnestly desire, that in the approaches of a dissolution, you may find that fulfilled to you, which David prayed for ; "That the Lord would not forsake him in his old age, when strength faileth," Psalm lxxi. 9. The same I desire for you, even that you may now experience the refreshing virtue of all those gospel-truths, which Christ has so long entrusted you with, as his messenger unto others ; that you may have the merit of his satisfaction and righteousness applied, for your perfect absolution from all sin and guilt ; the influence and conduct of his Spirit, to steer all your meditations, and thoughts, hopes, and desires ; the consolations of his grace and love, to sweeten your travel through the valley of death, and give you at last a refreshing arrival at the throne of eternal rest ; and there harbor you, after all the incumbrance and warfare of this present state, in the fruition of his immediate presence, without spot, in Jesus Christ ; the glimpses whereof I heartily desire you may beforehand partake of, as an earnest of that great, full, and perfect revelation and enjoyment, when time shall be no more. So, with my hearty and unfeigned respects, I remain, in truth and real affection Yours.

1674. — *To H. W.*

I RECEIVED yours of the 25th past, which was exceedingly welcome to me ; and therefore I return you hearty thanks, both for it, and your candid acceptance of that token I sent you ; being an indication (such as it was) of the respect and value, which from my very heart, and that deservedly, I bear towards you. Your letter, written (as I see) with an aged, feeble hand, I have read over with great acceptation, and account it to me the same as a precious balm. I understand that Mr. O., after a very small time of sickness, in a few moments' space, departed this life : and thus we are dropping away, hastening towards a dissolution, where the eye that now seeth us, shall see us no more. Blessed be that Redeemer, who will not call home any of his peculiar number, before he has finished the design of his grace, and the purpose of his will by them, and in them. And blessed are those souls that are, in any saving measure, helped by his Spirit to creep out of themselves, into his heart ; and in that union partake of all the benefits of his death, and purchase, both for present grace, and hope of

glory : in which number I am undoubtingly persuaded you are included ; and that you lie under the aspect of that divine goodness and love, which will feed the oil in your lamp, and will cause it to be ready trimmed and burning ; that so, when the bridegroom comes, and calls you off to immortality and life, you may be able to say, Lo, I come, for all is ready : such a readiness the Lord grant also to my poor soul. To his grace and favor, and the consolation of his Spirit, I commit you, and rest, etc.

1674. — *To E. D.*

LET your consideration feed on the quickening truths of the gospel ; fleeing to, and relying on, Christ, who is the arm of the Lord ; rejoicing in him, who requires you to cast every depressing burden from yourself, upon him : that is the true gospel method, and you shall not be disappointed. Faithful is God, who hath called you into the fellowship of his dear Son ; and thereby you have ground of boldness to enter in within the vail, and he has promised you shall never be cast out ; for your iniquities he will remember no more : and though the cross be somewhat difficult to bear, yet the reserve at last will fully recompense all ; and therefore lift up your head, for redemption is coming. We are troubled at the troubles the churches meet with in ———, and elsewhere. It is a sad day, when the word of salvation comes to be suppressed by souls that must perish without it : our business is, cheerfully and humbly to prepare for greater shocks. Nearness to God in Christ is the safest and sweetest sanctuary.

1675. — *To E. D.*

I HAVE not received any letter from you for many weeks, which is not a little afflictive. You are upon our hearts, and we cease not the particular mention of you in our prayers. Sometimes I fear your body lies under such extremity, that you cannot write ; and sometimes I am willing to relieve my thoughts by supposing, if it were so, I might, at least, have a letter from S. H. But though I know not your present case, yet I know my God and your God has you under his own love and care. His great design, for his own glory, and your and my good, is to instruct us, and lead us into the life of resignation, and dependence singly and

fully upon himself. Saving light, faith, and truth are the very lessons he is calling upon me, and drawing me to learn; and, O for some good proficiency in this learning: nothing so sweet, nothing so secure, and nothing so completely advantageous. I left the lady F. this afternoon, very near, in appearance, to a dissolution, and A. P. breathing, and waiting for her change. Happy souls, who choose that part that shall never be taken away, but abide through death, unto life in perfection. I doubt not but where you are, you will have the good presence of God, who is both a sun and a shield; and withal, according to his promise, he will withhold no good thing from you, seeing he has given you to his Son, and his Son to you, who will cause you to have an upright regard to the law of that blessed relation; which is the condition of that promise. To the shadow of his wing I commend both you and my sister, longing to hear of her recovery, if the Lord please; but she is in a Father's hand, and under her Father's care and love. In sickness and health, living and dying, nothing can come amiss to those that love him, and give themselves perfectly away to him; as I am persuaded she has done, and can rejoice in that blessed bargain; a contract made by and through Christ, the faithful Witness, and watchful, prevalent Advocate; and however outward dispensations and providences work, they will work together for good, because his love, mercy and truth endure forever. Where the eye of his favor once fixes, he never takes it off; the tokens of which favor you have (through his free grace) had some taste of, that thereby you may be led, and helped to hope perfectly to the end, and humbly rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, in what method soever he is pleased to act in the way of his fatherly discipline. He is omnipotently, universally, and continually good in himself, and in the communications of his goodness to his people, waiting on him, and trusting in him. To him I commend you daily, and with him I leave you, etc.

1675. — To B. D.

In my last I acquainted you with the weakness of my daughter Elizabeth, at which time she continued with an intermixture of revivings now and then, and much refreshment, as to the state of her soul, and things eternal; and, in the doctors' opinion, in some good hope of recovery, until

the 5th instant, December, being the sabbath-day ; and then the doctors saw that the Lord had determined otherwise, and that evening he called her to himself. The loss of whose company is not only a piercing affliction to myself, etc., but lamented by divers others, who had experience of that worth which God himself had graciously beautified her soul with. He is most wise : oh that he may cause me distinctly to hear his voice herein, and to improve it to the utmost use he intends it for. It is your affliction that you are, by the providence of God, held so long at such a distance from us, under so many trials of your faith and patience on every hand ; which, as the Lord is pleased to help, I am after my weak measure, often presenting before him, entreating that he would bear up your heart, and assist you as he hath hitherto done, to go through the residue of your exercise in this pilgrimage. Commending you to his grace, strength, counsel, and blessing, I remain, etc.

1677. — *To J. L.*

SOME years have now passed without the intercourse of any letter between us. I should be glad our old acquaintance might not quite die, while we live and continue here. How it is with you I know not ; but for my own part, I have and do pass my pilgrimage here through a thorny wilderness of cares, difficulties, and temptations, all along ; and do expect no other, till I leave my sinful nature, and a dark, defiled world behind me : for I have abundant daily proof that this lower state is not my rest, but I wait and hope for that rest which remaineth. I am stricken in years, being now in the sixty-fourth year of my age ; and through the riches of free grace (and that alone) sailing towards the end of time, under the hope of eternal life ; and through the goodness of the Lord, do yet enjoy the company of my dear and suitable yoke fellow, as a helper and sweet companion with me in my voyage. I find also a gracious child, my daughter Elizabeth, whom the Lord eminently prepared for himself, and then translated her hence ; and God has left us one little branch : the Lord grant she may love to tread in the good steps of her sister, and enter, at last, into the same rest. I heartily desire it may every way go well with you ; and that, though distance of place hinder our converse here, yet we may, at last, see the face of Christ, and one another,

in the perfection of purity, and fulness of joy, in a better country.

1677.— *To C. S. D.*

I UNDERSTAND, by Mr. F., that you are all in health; long may it continue, and well may your time and health be improved. And as to any counsel that I am able to give you, 'tis far short of what you do or may receive; not only from the solemn ministration of the gospel by the faithful dispensers of the word, but also by those excellent books, fit for meditation, use, and application, of which I suppose you have many lying by you. Only I would say this; the principal part of religion (that which, in scripture, is called the kingdom of God) lies chiefly in heart-renewing power; whereby the throne and dominion of sin is broken; with daily warnings against it, and daily laboring to be free from its captivity; and to that end, there is necessity of the conviction of our sinful, yea, damnable condition by nature; and that not only in our own opinion and judgment, but in real view, sense, feeling, and inward operation and exercise; that so the knowledge of, and interest in Christ, may appear indispensably necessary, and perfectly desirable, as a "propitiation for sin," and to translate the soul into the pure image of himself in this world, as the fore-runner of an eternal fruition of all that blessedness he died to purchase. And upon manifold considerations, it doth eminently concern you to dig for this wisdom, as for hidden treasure. You have seen, and may further see, what a lean satisfaction it is that this lower world doth afford; what a sandy foundation it is to build our hope, delight or dependence upon; and how soon every flower withers. Therefore, daily beg of God light, truth in the inward part, and saving wisdom, to be your principle and guide, through the residue of time. Unto his grace I commend you, and rest, etc.

1677.— *To C. H. D.*

I RECEIVED your letter, and delivered that which you sent my brother: both he and I are sensible of the loss of your only brother. It doth concern you to consider the voice of God in these afflictions, one after another, and to improve them, so as to make God himself in Christ

your only standing refuge. And certainly, if these things do cause you to turn your eyes directly upon him, and to centre in him alone, you will find him "the husband of the widow, and father of the fatherless." In every trouble our wisest course is, to endeavor to learn what God is pleased to say to our souls therein: which is to get the hearts of his people more united unto himself by faith and clear resignation; for though the things and persons of this world do wither and fade, yet God himself is the rock of ages; and hath promised, "The righteous shall not be utterly desolate; for in the fire and in the water he will be with them, and never leave or forsake them." And therefore I would desire you to endeavor rather to improve your affliction by faith for spiritual use, than to waste away your thoughts unprofitably through unbelief in pondering, and dejecting your heart under these outward trials, though they be great. Therefore read and meditate the word, where provision of support is made, to answer all cases of distress. Spread your soul often before the Lord; open the bottom of your heart to him. Flee to the blood of Christ for daily atonement; and give yourself up to him who has said, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain you:" and then you will see reason, at length, to say, "It was good for me that I was afflicted; and that he or she is blessed whom God afflicts, and teacheth his law." Unto him I commend you, praying for you, that you and yours may have the gracious shelter of his love and kindness in every condition.

1678. — To C. E. D.

I OFTEN think of you; and look upon it as a gracious dealing of God towards you, not only to prolong your life to this age, but also, and chiefly, that he hath crowned your old age with an unwearied tendency towards a better life than you or I have ever yet seen, with that sight which we cannot here be capable of. I do hear sometimes by one or another, both of your being in the land of the living, and that you walk as becomes an aged disciple of Christ; adorning the doctrine you profess with a conversation suitable thereunto. The last time I heard from you was by our good friend Mrs. Stubbs; who was here but a few days before her husband, that holy and laborious minister of Christ,

took his leave of her ; breathing forth his last farewell to this present world ; and to that body of clay, in which he had served Christ, for gaining of souls into his flock, through a long course of years, diligent (I hope prospering) in the great embassy which the great Shepherd employed him in. His death was much bewailed by many, (especially by them that best knew his worth,) as a great loss to the interest and cause of Christ, both in city and country. The Lord, in mercy, raise up more supplies of like sincerity, diligence, and faithfulness in the Lord's vineyard. Dear cousin, the Lord is pleased to use many ways and means to cause us to make the utmost improvement of seasons and opportunities of grace, and gives many motives thereto ; amongst which this is one, that the prophets do not live forever ; and therefore he requires us to make speed, while the day of grace, and while the time of life, continues ; that we may not be found naked and unready, when our summons from hence, by death, shall be sent us. I have not arrived to the length of your days, but the effects of old age are much upon me, and the shadows of the evening have begun to appear ; therefore, as it is always, so especially is it needful for you and me, who are almost at the utmost bounds of our time, to look into, and much to strive after, the real and essential parts of godliness ; which lies much in this ; to ponder the corruption of our own nature, and the contradiction that it stands in, to the pure nature of God, and his revealed will ; till we arrive at such a self-abhorrence, and despair of any relief, which we can derive from whatever we are, or whatever we can do, 'as of ourselves ;' that we may betake ourselves entirely and perfectly to the grace revealed in Christ ; casting our anchor of hope there, and there only ; fleeing to the merits of Christ, and his single righteousness ; in the virtue, and under the covering whereof, to appear before him, when all flesh shall stand and receive their unalterable sentence ; that then we may have the comfortable happiness of that good word, "There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ." I cannot at present add more, only this ; let none of your past or present troubles, of what kind soever, hinder your rejoicing in your gracious God and Saviour, who hath fed you all your life long ; and will be your God, and your guide, and (as I am abundantly persuaded you will find him, according to all that he hath promised) your exceeding great reward, when

the days of rest and endless refreshing shall come. To his gracious guidance I commit you, and to the comfortable fellowship of the Holy Spirit. I pray for you, and desire to be remembered also by you, in your prayers unto the "God of all grace; even our own God and Father:" under whose wing I desire to leave you, and remain, etc.

1681.— To C. E. D.

GOD has been pleased to continue your life unto a great length of days; and though your outward man hath been withering, (yet, blessed be God, I perceive) your inward man hath been assisted by his good Spirit hitherto, to make a happy voyage to the haven of true rest. The Lord, in mercy, accompany you through the remaining part of your voyage, till you enter safely into the harbor, and are settled in the mansions, which Christ is gone before to prepare for you. I have myself much infirmity of body, and am in daily combat with the corruption and vileness of my own heart; from which, I hope, through the riches of free grace, to be ere long delivered: and I have an abundant hope as to the same, concerning yourself. Fix your eye upon the great Mediator, cast yourself wholly upon him; for he will never leave you, nor forsake you. One day's communion with God, without all sin, in that heavenly country, will make you full amends for all the difficulties you have passed through in your earthly pilgrimage. And though I am not like to see you in this world, I hope, through the grace of the everlasting covenant, to see you where there will be neither sin, nor old age, to molest either you or me any more. Dear cousin, the arms of divine love, grace, and mercy, be continually embracing you. I can now add no more; but do commend you into the hands of that God, whose I am persuaded you are, and whom you serve. My affectionate respects to yourself, and all your relations, and that seed of God which he hath been pleased to plant in your neighborhood. I remain your affectionate kinsman, and brother in Christ.

MEDITATION ON HIS DEATH-BED.*

April 18.—In the morning he spake, saying, “O Lord, how do I pass through nights and days! O wise God, and dost thou (speaking to himself) account him so? Lord, make me to account thee wise; and, good Lord, pardon me, and receive me. Oh happy day that is coming! Oh blessed day that is coming! I pass through death unto eternal life.” After that he said, “The captive shall return, there will be no more captivity. Oh sweet redemption! Much of our heaven here lies even in that little talk we have about it: and yet when we speak a word of it, we have scarcely a thought suitable to the greatness of it.” Some space after he fetched a deep groan; and with his eyes lifted up, and his right hand stretched forth, (as if the pains of death were upon him,) he said, “Sharp and welcome, sharp and welcome.” And a while after he said, “Lord, let me not die with any guilt upon me; but leave it all behind. Oh, let not any sin remain in me unrepented of. Let not any concurrence of heart with the least guilt be in me. Let there be upon my will an edge of hatred against every sin: create it in me now. Thou canst make me to delight in that which is contrary to my own will. Oh, let thy will be pleasing to me, and let my will be every way according to thy will. Let not the agonies of death be too terrible; let not the tempestuous billows of it be too terrible to me, nor to any of the race thou hast redeemed from death. Let the agonies of death be even pleasing to me in Christ. Oh the bitter cup, the unspeakable anger of God! (We have not drunk of it.) Oh the intolerable wrath of God, borne by that man! (meaning Jesus Christ) Oh the woful travail of Christ! We have discerned and laid to heart but a little of it; and that hath made repentance slight, and holy care trivial. And now, O Lord, thou reckonest with me, for undervaluing of that bloody agony: Lord, forgive me my guilt in this thing.

* The length of this Meditation prevented us from inserting it in the Life of Mr. Dorney, Christian Biography, No. 23.

I have not been a Christian in earnest as I ought. Oh! he that made himself the bottom of all sorrow, he suffered infinitely. Oh, such a Redeemer, oh, such a Redeemer! Alas! how unsuitable I have been to him! Lord, pardon my unsuitableness; I have been as a beast before thee: I have not come up to the call of that unutterable grace. And now, O Lord, I cannot stand in the battle; I cannot, now the arrows of death stick in my flesh; and I cannot bear it without great concussions of soul within me. But Oh! Oh! Oh! thou who art the God of all grace, who hast set up a kingdom of grace, and art the Head of that kingdom, be thou now pleased to show thy glory. Make death sweet, make the tendencies to death sweet, make every step to deliverance a pleasing step, O my God. Save thy worm, save thy worm, O my God, according to thy promises made to Jacob. I hearken what the Lord will say; he will speak peace in the blood of Jesus. Own me, O Lord, own me to be thy friend; yes, say to me, as thou spakest of Abraham, Thou art my friend. Dost thou love me? Dost thou at this time love me with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul? Dost thou love me more than my nearest and dearest friends? than those intimate relations here, that continue with me in my tribulation? with a more inward, intense love? with an infiniteness beyond all these? Lord, let me know that thou lovest me in very deed; let me know, that thou lovest me by name; let me know that thou hast an eye upon me, more than doctors and friends; let me know, that every act of thine toward me is the effect of thy love. Love me, oh now, with thy whole heart; oh, make me to believe it. Help me to apprehend, that thou dost take notice of me, and art with me every moment; with me, as to my present case and concernment. It is dead friendship, when friends can neither hear nor see one another; but sure there is another friendship between thee and thine, and thou standest in the nearest relations to them. Art not thou my Father? (Hath not the Church said so, O Lord, thou art our Father? Isa. lxiv. 8). Thou art my Husband, my Friend; and art not ashamed to be called my Brother: oh wonderful! thou begattest me, I am born of thee. Lord, what shall I do with the great things of the gospel, if thou dost not give forth the Spirit of faith? O Lord, wilt not thou, who art truth, who art life, wilt not thou take the great work of making my religion practical upon thee? Thou canst make it to be in

power and truth unto me, so as may answer the very design thou aimest at. I have been praying through the days of thy drawing me after thee. O Lord, I would come to that kind of praying while I am here in the world, as might be a lovely copy of that praying, of that converse that will be with thee in heaven. Will prayer altogether cease in heaven? No, surely. Lord, glorify thyself, glorify thyself; glorified be God. O then, O that the very life and soul of that state may now be begun! O that I might hasten to that state! Thou detainest me here in thy wisdom. I would go unto thee, and into that life which will most glorify thee eternally. I would go where life is, and no death. I would go where the fullest expression of the power of grace overcoming sinners may be openly manifest in me; even in me, who am a poor mortal. There are many things which I have found here, that are only likenesses to pure likeness to thee; and here I have lost wofully my way; Lord, open it. The heart is deceitful above all things, and it will have its working one way or other; but, Lord, I would go where there is purity without impurity; I would be with thee, Lord; for then I can speak to thee in thine own language better."

About two of the clock that day in the afternoon, he further extended his speech, as followeth: "The old world will be the old world still; it will remain to eternity; it will be only translated from hence, where it received its curse, to hell, to be in chains of darkness forever; but all the redeemed number shall be instated in their palaces of glory. I am in the very period of seeing wonders; I am in the very period of viewing death and life. I am under some sufferings, and they shall be sweet." And (speaking to himself) he said, "Thou shalt lie down in thy bed." And then, speaking to God, "Thou wilt not throw me into the grave in anger: thou wilt put me into the grave: thou wilt not say, Sleep there in death; thou wilt say, Sleep there a little, till the indignation be overpast; till that is inflicted on thee for sin, which was pronounced; and then that which passed away from Christ, shall also pass from thee. Lord, thou wilt not be unfaithful to thy word. God cannot lie; God cannot forget to be gracious: he cannot forget his own work. This is that God I desire to believe in, and resolve eternally to cling unto, with the truth of my whole heart. I have sinned, and thou hast pardoned me, and saved me with

a mighty hand. Help me in this hour, take away my fears. The last stroke that will be given, will be by the devil himself, because it is his last battle; and thou wilt permit him: but thou wilt bind him: and when thou hast unclenched his hands, he shall never fasten them upon me again. He is that lasting enemy which attends us from conversion to salvation. Lord, wilt not thou, who hast been destroying this enmity all along, now cause his enmity to be totally and manifestly destroyed? O, down with it, down, I pray thee, with the strength, the might, the power of the life of sin and darkness. Lord, thou hast promised to plague antichrist for all the plagues with which he hath plagued thine; O Lord, do thou pour out thy plagues upon him, while thou dost sustain him to be fighting in his last battle. Let him fight his battle; but let him, O God, drink of the rivers of thy wrath along with it. Let the weak overcome the strong; let thy people be lions, but let the devil be an enfeebled enemy. Serve thyself of all thy instruments, whatever they are; Lord, let them do the utmost service they are respectively capable of. Thy proper instruments, O make them glorious, make them glorious both in qualifications and actions; and those that are improper instruments, that are not instruments of thy delight, cause them also to do thy will, in all that work that is proper for them, and proper towards thy people, for the designs of thy glory upon them: so that the work of God may thrive in the world, and thy glory be mightily exalted. Oh thy majesty, thy kingdom, thy greatness and excellency! O that thou wouldst be wonderfully glorious in thy actings: thy nature is so, and thy actings do proceed from infinite excellency and glory. O let God be glorified. O let God be glorified. O Lord, thousands of kindnesses I have had from thee, and thou hast not had from me any suitable thanks. O Lord, take me out of this body; send me into the land of truth, where there is nothing but purity, holiness, and righteousness. Sometimes I begin a little to be amazed at my unsuitable actings towards thee in the day of grace; but, Lord, thou wouldst carry things so, that I might know my case, saved by grace indeed. The best of all good things thou hast given me, and thou hast preserved me entire; but, alas, I must travel all the way with a dead carcase, and be within the scent, the stench of it; ah, woful savor! And this beside hath made grievous havoc. Thou savest me;

and yet I carry that along with me that is my constant destruction, as a continual combatant till I see thy salvation. Thou lovest me all over, and yet hatest all over the least sin that is in me. And now, Lord, thou comest to show me what is the issue of these things. Little, indeed, it is thou showest me; yet that little is glorious. Oh, that the Son of God should come into the world, to be joined to me in the nearest conjunction; to assume the same nature, and to unite me to himself; that he might display the insuperable virtue and power of his own righteousness, for my righteousness, for my justification! We have reason to think the heavens will declare it, even this, to eternity; and this I have been made a partaker of. Oh, where are they that have the whole shine of the grace of the gospel upon them? Where they are, thou knowest, and every one of thy number shall know; they are not lost, they are treasured up. Lord, help me throughout this little period of suffering. Here I am, seeming to myself to be just taking leave of this poor body, that hath been wandering up and down some years. Dear God, wilt thou be pleased to help me? Thou hast helped me all along; now help me, that I may have such thoughts as become an heir of life; that my faith may not fail, that my soul may not be desolate, that my mind may not be dark. Lord, save me from the wonted assaults of Satan, now that I know not for how many days, or how many nights, thou hast designed me. Dear Lord, let me have thy special presence with me, and a heart formed to thy contrivance; and let me not contrive for myself. I know not the effects of this night. If I shall attain the period of my days this night, let it be in Divine rest. I have no other period but to be in God, to be in Christ. There is no way to a good issue of this conflict, but to overcome by the blood of the Lamb. Now I leave myself with thee, be with me, and be with all thy dear Zion: be with that beloved spouse whom thou hast redeemed from the earth; and this by means of the contrivance of thy grace in Christ; who lives, and will live, and is "the beginning of the creation of God," and was ever so. There is a promise of truth; fulfil it, O God of truth; "My people shall be all holy:" verify it, O God; verify thine own truth; thy word hath said it, "My people shall be all holy." Lord, thou hast a people, thou hast surely a people, and thy people, thou hast said shall be known; or else there would be no discovery of thy truth in promises, of

thy truth in threatenings: and, O Lord, this thou hast said: that there is the greatest possible difference between thy people and their concerns, and others. Thou wilt be singularly known in Jacob: now, Lord, be thou pleased to make it known that we are thine; and let it be made known to all. We were tricked and beguiled away from thee at first, but now we are grafted into life by that, which was no fraudulent pretence, but a reality; the most important reality that ever sun, moon, and stars saw, that ever angels saw: that is the thing I yearn towards. I rest me in God here a little while; I am, in the Spirit, waiting minutely, momentarily, when he will say, Come, and retire to be with me eternally. Yet a little while, and we shall say, that fulness is come, and the completion of all. All Israel shall be saved; and that period is coming on apace: now, now it is coming to me. O now let there be no blind child of God; O now no lazy child of God; O now for winged saints; O for those that mount and soar, who may answer what hath been promised in the book of the Revelation: the Spirit will have a time to do it in, when sloth shall be, by the Spirit of life, turned into industry, when the love of God shall be seven times more, when the glory of Christ's image shall be as when the sun shineth seven times brighter. Will God always be scarcely known in the earth? Will the God of all that grace that shines in men be himself continually so obscured? No, no. He longs to be glorified, and to glorify himself; and his children shall be answerable to their high calling. And, O that this might make my soul insatiably longing for this purity in its fulness! I adore him for any little thirst. Oh, the good time, when the heavens shall echo with the voice of all the redeemed hearts and tongues. Oh, the melody, when every redeemed tongue shall be able to speak to the hearing of the ends of the whole heavens. Oh, the melody of that great day, when saints and angels innumerable shall make up the chorus. Oh, never, never was there such melody! O Lord, keep me in my present work, till thou callest me to future work, and prepare me for the glorifying of thee forever. Help me in this instant; help me, leave me not now; help me through this thicket graciously. Lord, graciously deal with me at my dissolution, that nothing but actings of love and grace may be shining upon me. I leave myself with thee; I desire to do it perfectly."

OBITUARY NOTICE.

MR. HENRY DORNEY was born in the year 1613, at Uley, in the county of Gloucester, England, and was the fifth child, and son of Mr. Thomas Dorney, Gent., and Joanna his wife, both very religious characters. They had eleven children, towards whom they exercised a most tender and parental care, and were industriously diligent in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

After Mr. Henry Dorney had been religiously educated by his parents, and furthered in learning at country schools, he was, about the fourteenth year of his age, brought to London; where he spent much of his time with them, in attendance on the public ordinances of God's word and worship, at the morning and weekly lectures, besides the solemnities of worship on the Lord's day; at which time, as it was judged, the work of God's grace began effectually to seize on his heart.

After a short continuance in London, he retired again into the country, in the pursuit of human learning, and was at length settled at Newbury free-school, where, in a year's time, or a little more, he thrived so much in learning, that he became completely fit for the University. But for some cogent reasons his father (with his own consent, he being always very obedient) thought it more convenient to dispose of him to a trade; in attendance on which, and all along in the variety of outward changes in the course of his life, and amidst his busiest secular affairs and employments, he yet kept the rudiments of his school-learning; applying himself with great diligence, as he had spare time, to perfect his studies in the original tongues, wherein he was very expert and accurate, especially in the Hebrew, and retained an exact knowledge of them to his dying day.

His last sickness commenced on the 11th of March, 1683, and continued to the 25th of April following, when he died, in the 70th year of his age. And as he lived in all manner of conversation holily, so he finished his course, and died triumphantly.

It does not appear that Mr. Dorney published anything in his life time. The Tracts in this volume were his private meditations, and the Letters were written in confidence to his friends, without the least design of their ever being made public; but after his death, the persons, into whose hands they fell, read them with delight, and printed them.

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